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POEMS

by

SIR NIZAMAT JUNG

Edited by

ZAHIR AHMED

FOREWORDS BY

LORD WAVELL & LORD HAILEY

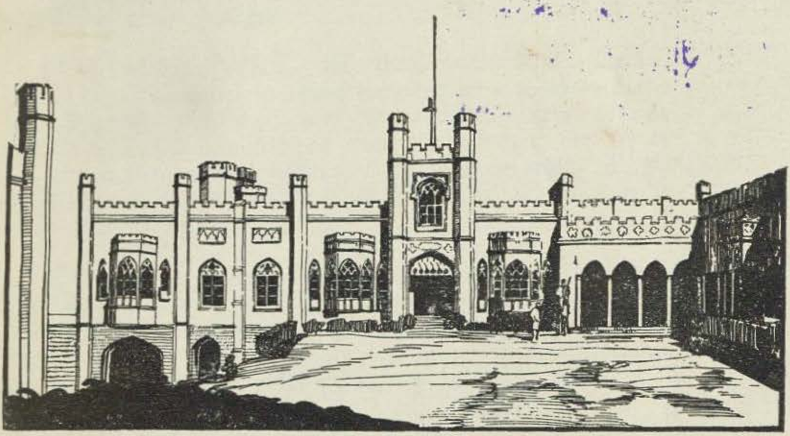
POEMS

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Hillfort—Exterior.

A hermit in my lonely cell,
A knight before my tower—
As such it is my lot to swell
In presence of that Power

Which, self-revealing, sent the Word,
And thus all Truth revealed
In solemn thunder music heard
By Prophets in the field.

The first volume containing a selection of Sir Nizamat Jung's poems was published in 1951 with a Foreword by Field Marshal Lord Wavell. The very next year Sir Nizamat's Sonnets were published in London with a foreword by Lord Hailey.

I had told Lord Wavell, only three weeks before his sad death, that I intended to bring together in a single volume Sir Nizamat's published and unpublished poems. The present volume, though not quite exhaustive, is being brought out in partial fulfilment of that promise. Little did I know at that time that Lord Wavell would so soon be taken away from our midst.

This volume includes some specimen translations—translations which may be mistaken for original compositions—done by Sir Nizamat at various times. Though 83 years old, he still takes delight in giving expression to his thoughts and sentiments in graceful prose and elegant verse.

I have retained in this volume, even at the risk of repetition, the 'Introductions' and the 'Forewords' originally written for the two separate volumes of his poems and sonnets previously published.

ZAHIR AHMED.

HYDERABAD,
August, 1954.

CONTENTS

Part I

Lyrical Poems

Of Nature and Meditation — Page

Part II

Rudel of Blaye and other Poems

Part IV

TRANSLATIONS (*Some Specimens*)

Illustrations

FOREWORD

SIR NIZAMAT JUNG of Hyderabad State gave most distinguished service to his State for many years, and always exercised his influence towards good and impartial government. He is a great friend and admirer of Great Britain and British ways, and has a complete mastery of the English language, as these poems of his show. He is, as I know from personal acquaintance, a man of much personal charm and dignity and of the highest principles.

His poems which have now been collected by Mr. Zahir Ahmed in this edition illustrate his love of beauty, of his own country, and of Great Britain. The India that he grew up in, and to which he gave such long and honourable service, has passed, in circumstances that must have caused him much anxiety and distress, but it is hoped that one of the great principles of his life, friendship between his country and ours, will endure.

Wavell F.M

February, 1950

INTRODUCTION

I

THIS edition of the poems of Sir Nizamat Jung is now offered to the public in part fulfilment of a promise I had made earlier in my book, LIFE'S YESTERDAYS—GLIMPSES OF SIR NIZAMAT JUNG AND HIS TIMES. My chief claim for editing his works is that for many years I have known Sir Nizamat fairly intimately and endeavoured to assess his personality, rather, the soul that illumines his work.

My aim is not so much to bring before the world the charm of a man who has so long shunned the limelight, preferring to dwell in seclusion, as to render him the homage that is his due as poet, philosopher and statesman.

There is perhaps little need to 'introduce' Sir Nizamat's writings to the public; so these pages aim at giving an outline of the different facets of his many-sided personality and his work, as they have impressed me and—I hope—a wider public.

II

Of few living men could it be said with greater veracity that "he is rich in all the noble gifts of

Nature" than of the venerable Nizamat Jung. The stamp of the synthetic and harmonising spirit of the Deccan is on his brow. He is that rare type—a man of letters as well as of affairs; the philosopher who illustrates his precepts by his own conduct—a sage and a poet. In a country where genius is often warped by politics and prejudices, he offers a fine example of untarnished culture and refined intellect.

There is something singularly fascinating about the life of this remarkable man. As a votary of knowledge, he drank deep at the fountains of English literature and tasted its myriad springs. As a servant of the State he gave proof of his wisdom, probity and unfaltering sense of duty, and as a man of culture the highest expression to his thought through the medium of English verse. Now, in his advanced age, he is a pilgrim in the sublime realms of Islam, having renounced everything secular to seek salvation through prayer and meditation.

III

Sir Nizamat's life falls into two main phases, that of the statesman and that of the poet, though of course, his official duties and literary pursuits were simultaneously carried out. His family traces its origin to Hazrat Abu Bakar Siddiq, the first Khalif. Born on April 22, 1871, Nizamuddin Ahmad (Nizamat Jung) was the second son of

Nawab Rifat Yar Jung, the then Commissioner of Gulbarga and one of the most respected Hyderabadis of his day. He received his early schooling at home and studied for four years at the *Madrasa-i-Aizza* founded by his father. In 1884 he sat for the Matriculation Examination of Madras University; at the age of 16 he proceeded to England for higher studies and entered Trinity College, Cambridge. At 21 he took the degrees of B.A. and LL.B., and at 24 was called to the Bar from the Inner Temple.

We get revealing glimpses of Sir Nizamat's boyhood from his *Recollections*. His love of books may be traced back to an incident in 1881. At the age of 10, he happened to find in his father's study a fascinating collection of books which were intended for distribution as prizes in the *Madrasa-i-Aizza*. The very sight of the collection excited the curiosity of the young Nizamuddin who began to devour them with enthusiasm. In a few days he had read through most of them, including the *Arabian Nights* and *Don Quixote*. He has told us that within three years of his first literary adventure he had read many of Shakespeare's plays and the whole of Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*.

This love of English poetry, and of Shakespeare in particular, developed into a passion while he was at Cambridge, and even the exacting demands of the regular course of University studies hardly

diminished his ardour. His enthusiasm for Shakespeare was, indeed, so great that he and a select circle of friends, of whom the famous Ranji, the late Jam Saheb of Nawanagar was one, formed themselves into what they termed the Shakespeare Reading Society of Cambridge. Nizamat Jung once told me that it was the three years and a half he spent at Cambridge that laid the foundations of his abiding interest in English literature.

But Shakespeare, if the greatest, was only one of the English poets whom he read and admired at that time. He also read widely the poetry of Burns, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Scott, Byron, Shelley and Keats, and renewed his acquaintance with Latin and German poets.

At the age of 26, a year after his return from England, he entered the service of the State and officiated in a judicial capacity till he was appointed Under-Secretary in the Legislative Department. He became Home Secretary in 1909. He served as a judge and later as Chief Justice of the High Court during the period 1910-1918, when he was drafted into the Political Department as Secretary. A year later he became a Member of the Nizam's Executive Council. He continued in this office till he retired from service in 1930. In his official career Sir Nizamat thus adorned various positions of authority and won distinction

in every one of them by his ability and integrity. He was naturally the recipient of many honours. He was elevated by the Nizam, and knighted by the King Emperor. His official life was distinguished by disinterested service and detachment from ambition—and the ways of the ambitious. If position and honours came to him, they came unsought and without his manœuvring for them. Also, there was an element of non-attachment in his secular life, a premonition of the total renunciation to follow, and an integral righteousness which culminated in his present total absorption in religious contemplation and meditation. His days are linked each to each by natural piety.

IV

He was in his elements as a reader and writer of literature. Here lay his true soul, the graceful spirit that gave him his colour and brightness. His earlier poetry was no more than the expression of his emotions, the stirrings of his imagination, and such ideas as floated on the surface. Brilliant and fascinating as these ideas were, they had form and beauty and mirrored the man of love and the humanist. As the years advanced and as he grew in range and depth of thought and reflection, a rare strain of spirituality, lofty as well as profound, became the urge and theme of his poetry. His heart and head were there, but the soul supervened, with its weird longing for the eternal, the

immutable. Here is the splendour of the poetry that springs from earth, as all human flights must, and ascends with pious fervour to heaven.

To one of Sir Nizamat Jung's culture, refinement and sensibility, poetry was the natural medium of expression. At first merely the mirror of his own feeling and fancy, his poetry became increasingly spiritual as he ripened in years and wisdom, and he made it the expression of his philosophy and religion. It is difficult to recall in what particular year he began to write poetry, for he disliked publicity and wrote only to satisfy his own inner urge, and mostly for his own pleasure.

It was not until 1918 that he became known for the first time as a poet to a small circle of English readers by a volume published in London by Messrs. Erskine Macdonald. It is, however, believed that some of his verse was written during his Cambridge days. The classical influence on his mind is to be discerned in his poems belonging to this period. According to him, *Sappho and Aphrodite* was an "exercise in Hellenistic feeling." He also acquired considerable felicity of expression as a verse translator and during his Cambridge years translation of *The Odes of Horace* was his hobby.

In a review of his works, the broad distinction between secular and spiritual may be further

analysed into six categories: Sonnets, Occasional Poems (including War Poems), *Death of Socrates* and other Poems, Rural Lyrics, Lyrical Poems and Islamic Poems.

Alike for depth of feeling and for beauty and power of expression, the *Sonnets* whic hwere published in 1917 can hardly be equalled. Referring to these, Mr. Meredith Starr wrote: "The *Sonnets* depict the very soul of chivalry and self-eclipse in devotion, and they contain lines which claim an equal fellowship with the works of those whose names are sonorous in the sphere of poetic genius." The *Poetry Review* with equal enthusiasm spoke of " a blaze of beauty in all his Sonnets, and not a little noble wisdom." The *Times Literary Supplement* extolled the Sonnets as being "full of singular excellence revealing a graceful fancy and true literary taste."

Among his *Occasional Poems*, mention may be made of the poem *India to England* which he wrote in 1914 to commemorate the historic landing of Indian troops in Marseilles. Equally famous is his *Coronation Ode* of 1911 which was written on the lines of Gray's *Pindaric Odes* and is distinguished by its " structure, imagery and stateliness of language." His *War Poems* of 1914 were no less popular and some of them were called " thrilling and grand " by an English friend of his. They reveal Nizamat Jung as "a poet with a warrior's

soul;" but was he not waging the battle of right against wrong, and fighting for light against darkness?

In the *Rural Lyrics* and *Lyrical Poems* he gives expression to his firm faith in immortality. According to him, "'Tis stamped upon the Universe, our Immortality." His spirit finds wings to the Eternal and brings him a mystical vision of Life, as for instance:

"Before mine eyes
A garden lies
Where blooms Life's mystic flower;
It takes its hue
From Heaven's bright blue,
And dawn's first roseate hour."

Of yet greater power and beauty are Nizamat Jung's Islamic poems, which I edited some years ago. It is in these poems that we are struck by his spiritual eminence—the loftiness of his faith and the ecstasy of his soul. These are his soul's tribute to the Holy Phophet and to Islam. The *Spirit of Light* is an invocation that conveys an inspiring message of serenity and hope. This poem has a beauty all its own:

"Spirit of Light, from starry mansions straying,
Whose flight is o'er this world of woe and strife,

On, on thy course, to mortal hearts conveying
God 's meaning of the mystery of life!

On, on thy course, wide-scattering from each pinion
Sparks that shall leave behind a trail of fire
To guide mankind from passion 's dire dominion
To purer heavens of the soul 's desire;

To cheer them toil-worn, weary and be-nighted,
With Heaven-born hope pure as the Dawn's first ray,
To gladden them in Sorrow 's gloom affrighted
With thy sure promise of eternal Day!

On, on thy course, with outspread wings pursuing
The destined orbit of thy heav'nward flight,
Wide o'er the world with bounteous hand bestrewing
Faith 's quenchless stars amid the shades of night."

Arabia Revisited is one of the finest of his Islamic poems and is notable for its simplicity, sincerity and vigour. In these lines we find his profound admiration for the land of the Prophet.

He exclaims:

"O barren land for ever blest,
Thou throne of Faith 's immortal power!"

In the *Recantation* (1935), the change that had come over the author as a result of his pilgrimages becomes more manifest as well as the shifting of the emphasis from the æsthetic to the real. In his later poems, which he classified under the title *Modern Age*, he reveals deep insight into reality and not a little of prophetic vision. His faith in the triumph of good over evil is strong, and in that respect he is a confirmed optimist, for though he sees clearly the evil that is ruling the world, he also sees hope:

"The vision comes, I see the fatal day...
The work of Hate in mouldering ruin lies.
But mark! when years of travail pass away,
A nobler world from out the wreck shall rise."

His optimism is manifest in his own beautiful words:

"Hails from far the coming ray,
Of light that lurks in gloom,
In garbage festering in decay,
The promised rose's bloom!"

Do we believe because we are optimists, or, are we optimists because we believe! Ah, that is the eternal rub!

His style is best described in his own words:

"I take the plain and forceful word
That comes to hand a trusty sword;
Enough that it should flash the fire
Of aught that doth my soul inspire."

Of special interest is Nizamat Jung's own reaction to his poetic efforts:

"'Twas not for fame, 'twas not for praise
I poured my spirit into song."

Nor did he live for fame or worldly position and power. His poetry breathes his life. Fame followed him, the shadow of his advancing light. His poetry has won for him the praise of discerning critics. "It is some satisfaction to me as a *Dakhni*," he once said, "to give some of my heart and service to my country in the shape of English poems. They may have little value as poems, but their value to me is that they express some of my innermost feelings and are a confession of faith." The great thing is that he had a faith worth confession.

V

A close study of Sir Nizamat Jung's personality is both a pleasure and an inspiration. He has made the most profound impression on his generation as a man, austere and simple, active and beneficent. The personal influence that he wielded over all who came into contact with him is deep.

It has been said of him that he has the "power to awaken in others a vivid consciousness of the moral value of literature through which we can find the way into a kingdom of great ideas."

To those who are not familiar with him, Sir Nizamat appears to be reserved in manner as he has always resolutely kept at a distance all self-seekers and sycophants. A person of his deep meditative type is bound to be a lover of solitude, though he welcomed select company; he delights in the society of the good and the learned. Both modesty and refinement prevented him from being popular in the vulgar sense of the word. He kept to himself, but never set himself above others in conceit or in self-righteousness.

Sir Nizamat Jung possesses æsthetic tastes of a high order and is in particular a lover of architecture. It was surprising that in spite of the pressure of his official duties as a Member of the Nizam's Cabinet he found time to build a magnificent house in the mediæval style, and, what is yet more surprising, he was his own architect.

His retirement in 1930 opened a new chapter in his life. From this time on we see him more obviously as what he has always been in essence and reality, a mystic and man of religion. Not that he was not religious-minded before, but the forces that had been working in his mind for so

long had their fruition then. His personality blossomed into full flower, radiant and arresting in detached beauty. His troubled mind found in Islam the practical philosophy of life that satisfied and sustained him.

VI

Here is his confession:

"Nor in the philosophic mind
Nor in the poet's art
Could I that secret solace find
Which soothes the troubled heart.

But in the spirit of Islam,
Which could lost faiths redeem
I found the Soul's marmoreal calm,
Of Plato's cherished dream."

Then began the series of pilgrimages to Mecca which he made "not to earn any heavenly reward" but "to feel the greatness of Islam at the fountain-head and to visualise a mentally reconstructed pageant of its splendid career as it issued from the desert and overspread the earth." To him the desert proved to be a wonderful restorer. "The barren land for ever blest" gave him spiritual vigour and strengthened his soul. That he was profoundly impressed by the spirit of perfect equality that prevails in Mecca is evident from these striking lines:

"Here men are equal, and God's subjects they,
Here, on these sands, beneath this burning sky
Equality is not a man-made creed,
A specious theme on revolution's lips.

It is no institution but a feeling———
An instinct and an impulse of the heart.
By God 'twas given and by God preserved,
Fostered by the breath of Islam through the ages."

He found Medina even more attractive and felt that a great mysterious power was at work there, "the spell of a marvellous personality who created a new order in the old world." In his view Medina still is the centre of Islamic power, the centre of the great world force called Islam. His Persian poems are a proof of the inspiration which Medina gave him. His repeated visits to Arabia made the current of his inspiration flow more steadily and increased in him the assurance of "unchanging reality amidst the false appearances of life."

Among the qualities that have distinguished the life of Nizamat Jung the most striking are philanthropy and the spirit of contentment. He tells us that when as a schoolboy he happened to read *Shelley's Lines written in Dejection near Naples,* he was greatly struck by the following lines :

"Nor that content surpassing wealth
The sage in meditation found,
And walked with inward glory crowned."

And with passing years the purport of these lines has sunk yet deeper and deeper into his heart. He takes delight in the utterances of the wise, and will often quote with approval such a saying as "Cheerful poverty is a thing of beauty." He is most happy when he is able to reach what he terms "the hermit's life of no desire." "I might well be proud of this," he once said, "because our Prophet's pride in his poverty is one of the noblest lessons we have received from him."

As years passed Nizamat Jung's qualities of contentment, simplicity and spiritual serenity became more and more marked, and he seems to be living in a higher world than ours. He is never satisfied nor rests content in his pursuit of spiritual truth and bliss; but is ever engaged in mounting higher and yet higher on restless wing and with tireless hope. The outlook of his life is best revealed in these following lines of his:

"What though but a lonely dreamer,
Let me have consoling dreams,
Let me dream to find the real."

This correctly reveals both his philosophy and his religion. Is reality then to be reached only through a dream? What a tantalising thought!

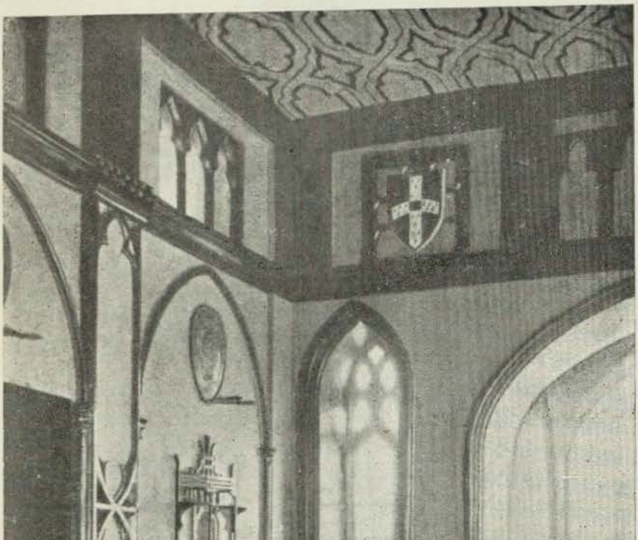
A stainless and dedicated life is Nizamat Jung's in every respect. No warmer tribute has been paid to him than that by one of the greatest of his admirers and friends, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, who, in words of rare felicity and eloquence, described him as "poet, politician, courtier, administrator, equally at home in the seclusion of a scholar's study and in the larger world of public affairs, ardent votary of European literatures and philosophies, whose mind seems to tarry unduly long in the classic groves and romantic landscapes of western culture, and now in the ultimate realization of his true destiny as a humble and mystic pilgrim in the caravan of Islam."

Fortunes fluctuate, destinies change, the caravan passes on, and as we behold the pilgrims progress, we see in their forefront the unflinching purpose and splendid grace of Nizamat Jung who in life has revealed the spirit of true nobleness and chivalry and in letters the classic mould of the philosopher-poet.

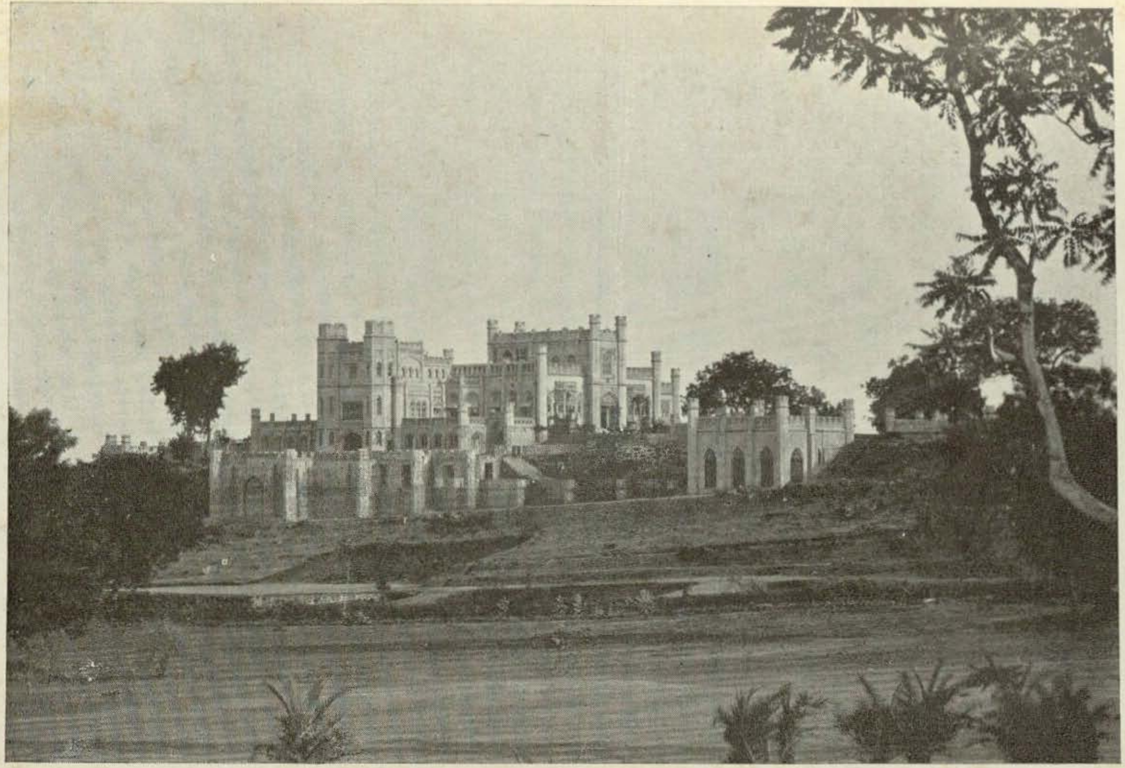
ZAHIR AHMED.

TRINITY COLLEGE,
THE NEW GUEST HOUSE,
CAMBRIDGE

May 26, 1949.



HILLFORT—*Interior*



HILLFORT—NORTH VIEW

TO H.E.H. THE NIZAM*

ENTHRONED in hearts of love and loyalty,
Crowned with exalted virtues that combine
With temporal power the attributes divine—
Mercy and grace with might and majesty;
Be such thy station, such God's gifts to thee
Whose rule should image forth His will benign.
May thus, through thee, the glory of thy line
Be voiced abroad in lands beyond the sea!

Firm on the righteous path thy fathers trod,
Staunch in their faith, long may thy hands sustain
The trust by Heaven vouchsafed, with wisdom's art,

Till time proclaim "His reign was blessed by God."
'Tis thine to look above, and thine to gain
By love dominion o'er each faithful heart!

* On the occasion of his Silver Jubilee, 1937.

LYRICAL POEMS

Of Nature and Meditation

Invocation

SPIRIT of Light, from starry mansions straying,
Whose flight is o'er this world of woe and strife,
On, on thy course, to mortal hearts conveying
God's meaning of the mystery of life!

On, on thy course, wide-scattering from each pinion
Sparks that shall leave behind a trail of fire
To guide mankind from passion's dire dominion
To purer heavens of the soul's desire;

To cheer them toil-worn, weary and benighted,
With Heaven-born hope pure as the Dawn's first ray,
To gladden them in Sorrow's gloom affrighted
With thy sure promise of eternal Day!

O sing to them thy song of hope and gladness,
Dispel all sombre shadows from the air,
Till freed from dismal doubt and fear and sadness,
The heart of man shall deem the world more fair!

Bare to the skies in its unsullied brightness
The keen edge of thy spirit-tempered blade
Held in that hand aloft, whose radiant whiteness
The Lord of Light hath His own symbol made!

Give it to those who seek the path of glory
Beyond the narrow precincts of the grave;
Above the loud acclaim of song or story,
Who keep life's tenor righteous, bright and brave

To quell the powers of darkness that surround them,
(Guileful to lure and eager to destroy)
Whose vain deluding phantoms throng around them
And feign the guise of Wealth and Peace and Joy.

On, on thy course, with outspread wings pursuing
The destined orbit of thy heav'nward flight [ing
Wide o'er the world with bounteous hand bestrew-
Faith's quenchless stars amid the shades of night.

A Confession* (1889-1929)

REMOTE from haunts of selfishness and strife,
Away from scenes of folly and of crime,
I longed in rural bowers to pass my life,
Where Nature's voice attunes the Poet's rhyme.

Nor wealth nor grandeur did I ever ask
Of God or man ; disdained the pomp of power,
And luxuries that borrow comfort's mask,
And sensual pleasures that the heart devour.

A soul contented and a hopeful mind,
A heart sincere whose love can sympathize
With all true wants and sorrows of mankind,
Yet deems God's ways benignant, just and wise—

These have I found where Solitude can please,
And Melancholy wears a gracious smile.
They set regret and vain remorse at ease
And lurking care of all its pain beguile.

Here Nature's hand my simple wants supplies
From fields around and laden boughs o'erhead,
And gentle breezes soothe my drowsy eyes
When weary limbs have found some grassy bed.

Here birds and insects joining in a hymn
With grateful hearts His bounteous gifts proclaim,
And not afar, in leafy cloisters dim
Some hermit songster glorifies the name .

Of One Who taught my heart the song of love
And joy and peace, Whose influence benign
Breathes o'er this earth, and fills the heavens above
Where countless worlds in quenchless glory shine

* First sketched in a garden in Europe in 1889.

And here unto my bosom has been given,
Of all its dregs of passion purified,
A share of that divinest gift of Heaven,
The power of faith, to selfish souls denied.

And haply thus my spirit which has bowed
Before the shrine of unseen Beauty long,
May feel her living breath and be endowed
With truer vision for a nobler song.

A Lesson

IS there not many a nameless flower,
On rocky, sterile soil that grows,—
As gay as in her well-trimmed bower
The garden-queen, the gorgeous rose?

No fost'ring care, no tender toil,
It asks no aid of cunning Art;
Nor Nature's gift, congenial soil
To paint its face, to cheer its heart.

Alike in sunshine and in gloom,
In noontide heat, in midnight cold
The Power that made it bids it bloom
And to the heavens its heart unfold

And to the heart of man convey,
With hopeful smile, this precious lore,
That He Who breathes life into clay
Will guard that life for ever more,

To make it blossom fair and bright
As well in poverty and woe
As when kind Fortune's powers unite
Her richest bounty to bestow.

On Returning to My Country-House

LONG years have flown since in these shades reclined
I dreamed of rural peace, and hoped to find
A quiet Eden in life's busy plan
Before the end of my allotted span.

And here I come again to dream once more,
Those years behind me which then lay before.
Life's sweet and bitter, both have been my share ;
And Time has shown me both his foul and fair.

If tempted by the false, I have been true
To faith and honour's vows, let me renew
Before the set of sun my morning dream
And hail once more its visionary gleam.

Visions of truth ! Fair dreams ordained to be
Through life a message and a prophecy !
Guide my weak steps, be stars of heaven to light
The path that lies before me ere 'tis night.

A Day in the Country

THIS morn I broke the prison of my care
To gaze on Nature's form. How free and fair,
Robed in a radiant garb of sunlit air !

Where circling hills and swelling plains are seen,
A silvery azure shading into green,
There Freedom dwells with Loveliness serene.

Soft fleecy clouds are floating overhead,
From land to land by favouring breezes led,
And scattering pearls on Nature's bridal bed .

Turning from these my joyous eyes can see
Where village herds are browsing on the lea—
Calm like their hills and plains, contented, free.

Yon ploughman bending o'er the furrowed plain—
Has he no cares, no lurking thought of pain ?
He sees his harvest in a single grain !

Great Nature's God ! Thy earth and heavens seem
Partakers of man's toil, his faith, his dream.
Turn thou to light our faith's in constant gleam.

Country Life

'TIS life to look beyond oneself
Upon all forms of life,
On leaf and flower as sprite and elf
That laugh at toil and strife !

In every flower a fairy fair
Doth guard its tender bloom
To throw upon the wandering air
A largesse of perfume.

I watch the rain-clouds drifting low,
The Westwind sweeping by,
The cool green grassy earth below
The soft and silvery sky ;

The purple sprouting on the trees,
The buds with winking eyes,
All swaying to the gentle breeze
That whispering passes by ;

The cattle lowing in the mead
To show their hearts' content
Mid bounties that from scattered seed
Kind Providence has sent;

I watch the birds that sew their nests
On leaves that hang from boughs;
Till hopes and joys that thrill their breasts
My hopes and joys arouse.

I watch the swallows in the air,
How joyously they drive!
As sailing singly, or in pair,
They wheel and dart and dive.

And butterflies that come to greet
The sunshine and the shower;
And honey-bees that sip the sweet
Of many a sugared flower.

I watch the guests at Nature's feast
Around her table spread—
Her banquet laid for bird and beast,
Where all are freely fed.

I see God's bounty unconfined—
(No scribes compute the cost)
His gifts are scattered on the wind,
And nought is deemed as lost.

Un-numbered blessings to man's heart
From Nature's heart are sent,
A heavenly solace to impart
And teach his heart content.

Life is the boon that Nature's God
Spreads out before man's gaze,
Where with the heart the sky and sod
Are one in prayer and praise.

When Summer with his breath ablaze
Descends on hill and vale,
And mango-groves his mellowing rays
With laden branches hail;

The orange ripening on the tree
Adorns the green with gold,
And broad-leaved plantains swaying free
Their clustered sheaths unfold;

And divers fruits on branches spread
Now change their varying green
To yellow, purple, pink and red
In tints of brighter sheen;

My heart then throbs to hymn His praise
Who doth His bounties pour
To nurture Life in nameless ways
From out His endless store.

A Bird's Nest

SUSPENDED from a slender twig,
A neatly woven nest:
A well-built cottage facing East,
Well-sheltered from the West!

An oriel window well-designed
For view and air and light;
Awning above, and window-sill
Up to the sitter's height!

The little bird that made this nest
With its own little beak
Can teach us more than learning's lore,
It gives us what we seek.

By instinct taught the builder's art
To use with native skill,
It tells us of the wondrous powers
That God's creation fill:

What miracles of Providence
In Nature's breast reside,
What mysteries the heart of man
Must own with humbled pride!

To A Song Bird

SWEET singer! Thine unlaboured song
In eddying rapture flows
When first a flush of light along
The far horizon glows.

Say, is it worship, dost thou pour
To Nature kind and fair,
That spreads for thee her bounteous store,
A pure heart's fervent prayer

To celebrate her mysteries,
Her beneficent powers:
Blue skies, green fields, and blossomed trees
And smiling fruits and flowers?

Maybe thy notes that lightly swell
And soar from earth to heaven,
Of grateful Nature's joyance tell
For all that God has given.

Would I were like thee, happy bird,
From care and sorrow free,
To make my joyous warbling heard
From out some leafy tree!

From tree to tree, from flow'r to flow'r
With lightsome heart to roam,—
Beyond the reach of human pow'r
Some topmost bough my home.

With wants but few and soon supplied
For future lot no fear,
No sigh for hoped-for bliss denied,
For wasted youth no tear;

To live the destined years in peace,
In freedom and alone;
To quit the world, when life shall cease,
Unwept, unseen, unknown.

Once more, once more that hymn of joy
To show that nothing can
Thy life perturb, thy heart annoy—
Unlike the heart of man!

Sing on, for ever! thou dost pour
New hopes into my heart;
Thy rapture bids my spirit soar
And life's grim cares depart.

With thee I fly to eastern skies,
Where blushing Dawn gives birth
To golden light that bids arise
Fresh blossoms round the earth.

Ah! would that I might with thee float
Upon the dawn-lit air.
Each pulse of joy that swells thy throat
My joyous heart would share

Till, all the ills of life forgot,
I should become like thee
A bodied joy, a winged thought,
From earthly passions free.

Our Country-House Swallow

O SWALLOW circling in the air,
Aimless and full of glee!
My free-wing'd spirit loves to share
Thine aerial revelry.

Not thine the joy that thrills with song
Of woven melody
The dawn-lit air that breathes along
The dew-bespangled lea.

No yearning passion's suffering joy,
No raptured agony
In midnight orisons employ
Thy vocal minstrelsy.

The lark our morning mood may cheer
With dawn's rich harmony,
The nightingale our pensive ear
With night's grand symphony.

But thy sharp twitter like a dart
Springs from a heart that's free,
I feel the spasm of thy heart,
Its throb of liberty.

Now flashing shy above my head,
Now sliding soft by me,
Then by some gentler impulse led,
Thou seek'st my company.

Friendly to man, thou hast no fear
Of human treachery—
Wheeling afar, then wheeling near,
Trustful and bold and free,

A message from the heaven's wide blue
Thou seem'st to bring with thee—
Of hopes that live and tidings true
Of joys that are to be.

Not like the feathered race aloof,
Thy home the forest tree,
Thou com'st to build beneath our roof;
Thou lov'st to live with me.

Give me thy simple heart to know,
That I may be like thee
Sharing each other's weal and woe,
Good neighbours let us be.

A Country Walk

GREY skies above, green fields around,
Soft breezes, shine and shower;
Beneath our roving feet the ground
Pulsing with new-born power.
It was the season when the earth
Rejoicing waits the promised birth
Of corn and fruit and flower.

Such was the scene that Nature's hand
With bounteous care had spread
Where idly o'er the teeming land
We roamed, by fancy led;
By thorn-fenced field, by peasant's cot,
By crumbling towers, by many a spot
Stone-marked, where sleep the dead.

We reached a hamlet poor and mean;
In sad repose it lay.
A watch-tower rose above the scene

And frowned in ruin grey;
And ancient, age-gnarled tamarind trees
Slow nodding whispered to the breeze
Tales of a bygone day.

Though glad the earth with life renewed
And Nature's feast begun,
Though glad the tiller's heart imbued
With hope from labour won,
Yet those old trees and that grey tower
Seemed to bemoan departed power
And days of gladness done.

We passed them by and wandered on,
Allured by scenes more gay,
Where dimly bright the sunbeams shone
Beyond the moated way.
But soon we paused—was it a stone,
Was it a bleaching human bone,
Across our path that lay?

'A femoral bone' my friend exclaimed,
Who knew it at first sight,
And lifted up the thing he named
With somewhat of delight.
He was a doctor and his heart
(Made callous by long-practised art)
Felt not its piteous plight.

But oh! to me that human bone
With human soul was rife........
Fraught with the spell of the unknown,
The mystery of Life!
I saw it robed in human form,
Tingling with strength, with life-blood warm,
And stirred by passion's strife.

I saw it in its rustic home
Growing from child to man,
Saw it a sturdy peasant roam
Through life's allotted span,
Taking with life its heritage,
The storms of youth, the calm of age—
Life's blessings and its ban.

A fleshless bone, yet once it trod
'Mid scenes so sadly fair,
With buoyant tread the earth of God
And breathed the joyous air,
And from the earth and from the sun
By dint of toilsome labour won
The life that was its share.

And in that life lay joy and grief
And love and hope and fear—
The transient charm, alas, too brief,
Of all that life holds dear:
The soothing love of wife and child,
By which the heart is reconciled
To fate however drear.

Few were its wants, and soon supplied;
Life's nobler cares unknown.
The heart's aspiring hopes denied,
The spirit's anguished moan
For visions vanished—these were not
The joy, the sorrow of its lot,—
That nameless human bone.

God gave it with the need to live,
Strength that from patience springs,
And faith, the boon His breath can give
To peasants as to kings.
With these it walked through life to death,
Gave back to heaven its borrowed breath
Upborne on Mercy's wings.

And back to Nature's hand it gave
The gifts by Nature given,
Unheeded, unremembered save
By God of earth and heaven.
Its tomb is now th' Eternal Mind,
Though its frail atoms unconfined
Upon the winds are driven.

The voiceless yearnings of the breast
Have reached their home on high;
The restless human heart's at rest.
Let their last relic lie
Where now the spirit rides the air
Blent with the glancing sunbeams fair,
Beneath its native sky!

A Banyan Tree*

ONLY a Banyan tree!
No gardener cares to see
Its dank and dismal shade
O'er what his hands have made
So beautiful by art.
True, but for me
This common Banyan tree
Has got a place in Nature's heart.
There by the hands
Of Nature's Gardener it was laid,
And there it stands.

From one small seed
That scarce the eye would heed
This Titan form has grown.
His snaky arms earthward descend
To clasp his mother earth
Who gave him birth,

*My first attempt at free verse spoken during a stroll in my garden at Vikarabad in 1936.

Huge branches—each a tree—
Skyward ascend,
Broad leaves and scarlet berries
About them thrown,
By wild winds blown.

All, all from one small seed
That scarce the eye would heed,
One seed blown by the wind
Its destiny to find;
One of a thousand thrown—
Their fate unknown.
Round one the earth did close
To bury it—it rose
From death to life,
With patient strife
Striving with all that stood
Its rising to oppose.

And now it grows, and grows—
Once low as earth, now high,
As though 'twould touch the sky;
Once but two leaves, and now
Each leafy forked bough
Itself a tree!
I lie beneath its shade—
I whose weak hands once made
Its infant bed—even I,
Still grovelling on the earth,
With heart and eye
Unto the sky.

Beneath its shade I lie,
Gaze, wonder, question why
All this has been.
I gaze upon the scene
Above me, and around:
All blue, all green,

And soft and cool the brown
Leaf-scented ground,
And in between,
The sun's glad golden light,
The wild dove's fluttering flight
Through air serene.
Here in its shade I lie,
Dream, wonder, question why
All this has been.

On a Sudden View of a Beautiful Scene

'TIS Nature's glance divinely fair:
Her voice is in the breeze,
Gay visions float upon the air,
The sunshine and the trees.

What scenes are flashed upon mine eyes,
And crowd upon my soul!
To realms unseen my spirit flies
Where boundless systems roll.

I see the Universe, 'tis swayed
But by a breath, a sign,
And forms are moulded, worlds are made.
And Thou revealed in Thine.

A Parable of Life

I MUSED on Life; there stood before mine eyes
A lifeless trunk—a withered leafless tree.
Its jagged arms showed black against the skies—
A woeful emblem of mortality.

Ah ! Once a thing of beauty it had been,
With life's swift current in each branch and root,
Rejoicing in its crown of foliage green,
Proud of its opening blossoms, ripening fruit.

With saddened heart I mused, and then I saw
Elsewhere, afar,—where life shall ever be—
That tree revived as by a higher law :
I saw it imaged in Eternity !

Nature's Message

SOME strain from Nature's harmonies
Blends with the soul's desire,
Some spirit floating in the breeze
Lends feeling to the lyre.

It comes to us from farthest skies
And from remotest stars ;
From depths, from heights where hidden lies
Some power that makes or mars.

It comes from scenes around us spread,
Through things both great and small ;
Through thoughts that heavenward raise the head
And those that earthward fall.

Who leans on Nature's breast can hear
The music of her might.
A mystic voice is in his ear
Of sorrow and delight.

A message from the Maker's mind
To all that he has made ;
It gives new vision to the blind,
New faith to hope delayed.

Creation's cycles as they roll
Its blended notes prolong;
It wakens in the poet's soul
The melody of Song.

My Vision

WHEN I have gazed my fill
On earth and skies
I close mine eyes
And see from out the formless infinite
A vision rise.

What crystal rays along
The darkness glide
From side to side—
To roll as suns and moons and planets o'er
The heavens wide!

What worlds of land and water,
Hills and trees
And light and breeze.
What mountains, plains and valleys, rivers, streams
And lakes and seas.

How silence heaves with sound,
Darkness and light
Bring day and night.
What tracts lie frozen-dead, what thrilled with life
Shine fair and bright.

The earth lay lifeless once;
Her bosom thrills
As Nature fills
Her womb with seed, and herbs and blossoms crown
Soft-gliding rills.

Man sows and reaps ;
Bird, beast and insect gain
On hill and plain
The fruits and corn, the grasses and the seeds
That life sustain.

Mysterious Life, at first
Of nothing born !
What forms adorn
Thee by thy Maker's will—what wondrous robes
By Beauty worn !

His crown of power, He made
All things for thee
That thou mayst be
His witness for all time, His proof for all
Eternity.

He's will, and thou a garb
Around it thrown
That He be known
And every atom in the Universe
His presence own.

His Universe art thou,
That can be seen ;
A link between
The Maker and man's mind—a picture thrown
Upon a screen.

Eyes closed, I'm mind and soul
And better see
Through all that be.
Through every varying form and guise the One
Reality !

Dawn of Faith

O SORROW-LADEN Soul! for thee
What joy save in Eternity?
None here till in thy quest is found
Lost hope 'mid shadows that surround
Thy path of ceaseless toil and strife—
Thy sole reward in mortal life.

But 'tis not here thou hast to live,
Nor thine the meed this life can give.
There is a balm to soothe all pain
In hearts that know not to complain.
Undying faith to thee is given,
To guide thy thoughts from earth to heaven.

The vanished light which thou dost mourn
Now shines a star beyond life's bourn;
'Tis veiled, but love has seeing eyes
Can probe the secret of the skies.
Then take his message to thy heart,
'Twill bid the shades of grief depart.

Lo! through the darkness of the night
Shoot star-beams of celestial light,
And all the gates of heaven ope wide
To yield the bliss till now denied.
'Tis not for thee to doubt or fear;
The night is past, the dawn is near!

Sunset and Dawn

WITHIN the heart of Sunset's crimson glow
Behold the radiant mystery of the Dawn!
Emblems of youth and age! ye bid me know
The meaning of the long-lost light that shone

With all the glory of remembered heaven
Upon the wonder-world of childhood's prime
Ere phantom shades across its face were driven,
Cast by the sombre wings of restless Time.

Sunset and dawn! There's life and death between:
Alternate life and death of night and day,
Of joys and sorrows in life's changeful scene,
Of hopes and fears along its toilsome way.
Ye come to bid both day and night depart,
To realms where there is neither day nor night.
Ye come to paint Hope's message on my heart:
"Before and after darkness there is light"!

The Hermit

I CHANCED upon a hermit old,
  Who sat before his cell;
He gazed upon the calm blue sky
And muttered "all is well."

Some birds were sailing in the air,
Some cattle grazed below,
Where, gliding down a rocky ledge,
A rivulet did flow.

He saw me not, or heeded not,
Though I was by his side;
But when I greeted him aloud,
He turned and thus replied;

"All's well. 'Tis well with thee and me;
'Tis well with beast and man,
All life is His, and there is good
For each one in His plan."

"Man's life," said I, "is fraught with ill;
Midst troubles he is born;
By his and mankind's common woes
His ripening heart is torn,

He's born into a world of crime.
Of selfishness and woe,
Where, slowly hardening into vice,
His follies learn to grow.

His thought embitters all that's sweet;
His knowledge clouds his life;
His reason and his passions wage
A stern and ceaseless strife.

Who would not wish to change such life?
'Tis one of endless pain,
Where hope, despair and love and hate
In alternation reign."

"Then change thy plan of life," he said,
"But not for thoughtless ease.
Fight 'gainst thyself to conquer self;
The triumph brings release.

Thy thoughts were mine—until I saw
A fairer world arise,
And bowed my head before the Peace
Pervading earth and skies.

Thou see'st me here a lonely man
Who has no thought, no care—
Heart-free as yonder joyous birds
Now sailing in the air.

'Tis so. But when my life was young
I knew its bitter strife:
There stood the world of crimes and woes—
The image of my life!

I could not change another's ways,
But I could change my own;
Repress all rising selfishness
By which our will's o'erthrown;

Reject the false, accept the true,
And scorn the ignoble pride
Of those whom greed of rank and power,
And vanities misguide;

Whose nature leans tow'rd vice and crime,
But whose ingenious mind
Ne'er fails, when bent on selfish ends,
Some specious cause to find.

'Tis from the conflict of men's claims
Their sufferings arise,
What one's rapacious hand would seize,
Another's heart denies.

The Man, the Nation, and the Race —
The unit makes the whole;
To cure thy nation's maladies
Do thou first cure thy soul!

The ways of Nature, and of God—
Leave them for fools to blame.
Let villains their own world destroy
By fighting in God's name!

'Tis nought to us if we would walk
Calm, silent on our way,—
God's justice, mercy in our heart,
And peace by night and day.

I fought life's battle—and have won.
In Nature's arms I rest.
I served my country and my God,
And hold them in my breast."

L'Envoy Rural Contentment

THRICE blest the thankful heart that knows content,
Blest with the simple good that God hath sent;
Glad as the shrub that trodden in the sod
Springs up to greet the light that flows from God.
It heeds not Folly's pride nor Power's disdain
So long as Nature grants the power to gain
Life's sweet and simple joys from cot and field,
And faith that questions not the good they yield.
Indifferent to Fortune's frown or smile,
It scorns her fickle favours that beguile.
It holds the wealth of Nature in its core,
Too rich within itself to ask for more.

Of Mystic Aspiration

Faith

A LIGHT as from some fire unseen
That glows beyond the heavens serene;
A song as of the heavenly Quire;
A strain as of life's mystic lyre;
Ay, such is Faith that from on high
Sends hope to souls that never die.

Ode to Faith

O POWER unseen! that by the spring
And fountain of the Soul dost sing
Immortal songs to some celestial lyre,
Thy heaven-aspiring strains
And thrilling notes inspire
Hopes that all ills of life defy
And teach a mortal how to die.

'Tis thine, the ever-yearning breast to fill
With all the joys of peace,
To soothe grim discontent
And bid wild passions cease.

'Tis thine, the Prophet's godlike power;
Thy hallowed influence doth dower
The Sage's soul with Nature's mystic lore
Thou giv'st them second sight—
A power unknown before.

Through thee God's bounty doth reveal
His hidden purpose, till they feel—
What oft the passion-blunted sense disdains—
Immortal longings, joy
Such as the Angels feel when Love attains
Fulfilment, and self-loss
Is bliss without alloy.

To thee heav'n-eyed Philosophy,
To thee the noblest Poesy,
The one her light, the other owes her fire;
Without thy fervent breath
Their flickering flames expire.

'Tis thine to guide all mortal love
  Unto the golden realms above,
Where Love Immortal breathes
  Round Heaven's high throne,
That Man—an earthly clod—
  May learn a higher, purer life to own
And, rising high and higher,
  Commingle with his God!

O let the far-off light that lies
  Within the clear depths of thine eyes,
Upon my heart its chastening influence shed
  Till from its inmost depths
The shades of doubt have fled!

O let the music of thy voice
  Still, still my pensive soul rejoice
Till in its perfect harmony I forget
  The transient ills of life:
The struggle and the fever and the fret,
  And find the peace that's hid
Within the heart of strife.

Teach me, O teach the precious truth,
  That earth-born man, from earliest youth
Till final rest with sore vexations crossed,
  Oft borne adrift by passions, tempest-tossed,
Is still Heaven's charge whose hand will guide
  His puzzled wand'rings o'er the wide

Expanse of being from unknown to known.
  That through remorse and pain
He shall, with love, his native guilt atone,
  And thus the promised meed,
Eternal bliss shall gain!

To Night

O NIGHT! What wonders in thy bosom dwell,
Of Nature's mystery.
Thy silence thrills me and I own its spell
In starry minstrelsy.
I see the Void where Chaos whirled along
Until creative might
Bade throbbing silence burst forth into Song,
And darkness into Light.

A myriad worlds of splendour yet unborn
Did thy dark womb enfold
Till Light adorned Creation's primal morn,
And dowered it with gold.
By Music's unawakened harmony
Thy secret depths were stirred;
Life hailed with light Love's newborn melody
From far-off regions heard.

Yon orb of fire that makes our little day,
Wandering in thy domain,
Shows but a speck of earth and vapours gray
Till all is lost again
In thee, O Night, whose magic doth reveal
The marvels of His power
Who makes yon countless worlds of light to reel
Through boundless space each hour.

Each one a world to all but Him unknown,
A world of life and light;
Each one a world—to Him a glance alone—
All mystery and might.
From these, through thee, faith glides into man's soul,
Brings peace beyond all strife;
Calms, reassures, and pointing to the Whole,
Expands the bounds of life.

Man's sins may oft seek shelter 'neath thy wings,
Yet Heaven's own breath is thine.
To prophets' souls what messages it brings,
To make man's life divine!
To votaries' hearts what joys it doth reveal,
To saints what visions fair!
To genius bowed beneath misfortune's wheel,
What hopes that quell despair!

O, from thy starry height let spirits pure,
As ministers of grace
Come to men's hearts, the strong to reassure,
And from the weak efface
The stains of sins and follies left behind
In life's impassioned prime,
That chastened Hope a resting place may find
Beyond the wrecks of Time!

The Mystic

HE stands and gazes on the brow of night:
Silence around, but yon bright orbs that roll
Millions of miles above, they speak in light
And send a message to his hearkening soul.

The Universe, the life and death of man,
Religion, law and morals, faith and love—
Ay, every God-made scheme and man-made plan;
His life on earth below, his life above—

All seem commingled in one little word,
A word, a thought, a lightning flash, a beam
That passes through his heart unseen, unheard:
A voice, a light that trembles through a dream.

Yon stars above, they crumble and disperse—
Vapour once more to shapeless chaos hurled,
All storm-tossed atoms of a Universe,
Fragments adrift of many a shining world!

Time with his dusky train of formless years
Glides on, till all his signs as shadows flee;
Each symbol fades, each vestige disappears;
Its trail is lost upon a shoreless sea!

Alone he stands and waits—there's nought around,
No heaven, no earth, no flames, no gardens fair.
A viewless void where silence thrills like sound,
Surrounds him—yet the birth of life is there!

An echo of a breath on noiseless wings,
A voiceless spirit whispers, "O Rejoice!
I am thy Self unseen, and from me springs
All that is thou—e'en this unbodied voice.

I am thy Soul, eternal and divine—
A living symbol of a deathless Mind.
Yea, I was born of God—foredoomed to shine
Beyond all formless forms to dust consigned."

And then he sees that object of his care—
The ruined mansion of his parted breath—
A heap of fleshless, bleaching bones laid bare—
A gruesome monument of life and death.

"Is this the picture of my dreams of hope,
Ambition, passion, aspirations vain,
And endless strife with mightier powers to cope?
In this grim heap does aught of me remain?"

The spirit-voice, "Beyond the realm of strife,
Dead longings measure not or gain or loss:
Death but restores the boon of lasting life,
As essence purified of passion's dross.

When all created forms have passed away,
That which is life from Him shall never die.
Life is His light, Who maketh Night and Day
To wear the pictured garb of Earth and Sky."

The River of Life

TO stand beside the flowing tide
Of Life as it appears,
To watch its devious current glide
Adown the vale of years!

What shine and shower of smiles and tears!
What joys mid grief and pain!
What strife of fleeting hopes and fears!
What memories remain!

Fair stream! where'er thy course has lain,
There memory lingers still;
Its magic lies o'er mead and plain,
O'er valley, grove and hill.

Spring gone, its charms have ceased to thrill;
And summer's pleasures cloy.
Autumn draws nigh whose grace can fill
The heart with tranquil joy.

It brings what Time will not destroy
Nor wayward Fate control—
The faith that shows when ills annoy,
Heaven nearer to the soul.

Glide on, and let thy waters roll
Beyond Time's shifting sand,
On, onward to their destined goal
Far past the sunset strand!

I've watched thy wandering course on land;
Now watch thee join the sea,
Led onward by the guiding hand
That holds Eternity.

A Vision of Life

BEFORE mine eyes
A garden lies
Where blooms Life's mystic flower.
It takes its hue
From heaven's bright blue
And dawn's first roseate hour.

It drinks the wine
Of glad sunshine
In pearly drops of dew;
Receives a share
From earth and air
Of fragrance ever new.

The stars of night
Send forth their light
In many a wandering beam,
The moon stoops low
To cast a glow
Round its enchanted dream.

Life's beauteous dream!
God's grace doth seem
To fill Creation's plan,
And from the height
Descends like light
Into the soul of man.

A Vision of Death

I SEE on their deathbed
The proud and the lowly,
With fond hearts around them
Bewailing their death.
O let them rejoice
For the life that's made holy
By the last gift to Nature—
Release of the breath!

When life and death meet
It is death that is dying,
The worn shell of being
Thrown back to the earth;
The captive is ransomed,
The spirit is flying
To find in the Eternal
The home of its birth.

I see the dead rise
When the death-call is ringing:
The pure and the righteous,
The fair and the brave.
O'er the dust that entombs them
Wild flowers are springing,
Soft breezes sigh fragrance
As they pass o'er each grave.

The atoms of Nature
With God's breath combining
Are hid in her bosom
As living, not dead
Where wild-flowers are blowing,
Where star worlds are shining,—
In the dust under foot
In the void overhead.

It is life to rejoin
The Source of all being,
Where all things are nothing
And nothing is all,
When the never-seen Presence,
All-hearing, all-seeing
Will back to its bosom
The wanderer recall.

Farewell

A SPECTRAL face as in a dream!
  Life sinks, its light and colour fail;
A sigh, a tremor and a gleam
Of conscious thought as through a veil.

Before the eyes a clouded sky,
But still there sounds within the heart
Some inborne message from on high,
Some hope that never will depart.

There lurks within these glazing eyes
What death itself will scarcely hide,—
The faith that seeks beyond the skies
The soul's fulfilment here denied.

That holy calm so dread to view,
It shrouds a world of joy and woe:
All that the failing heart e'er knew,
All that the soaring soul will know.

How much unsaid lies in that breast—
Unsaid, but to the Knower known,
Who guides the pilgrim soul to rest
Beyond life's sorrow-clouded zone.

He shows the mystery of fate
As truth ere life's false vision flies ;
Consoles the heart that learns too late
The little worth of life's best prize.

Shades gather round life's fading glow,
As when the sinking sun has set ;
One breath then sweeps away all woe
Beyond the dim shores of regret.

A Breath of Persian Poetry

To The Memory

of

Sarojini Naidu

(A life-long friend)

Who once wrote to me : " Have you never felt the call of the blood ? You who have the ecstasy of Hafiz........and of Rumi........as the inheritance of your race ?........"

The Vision of Hafiz

LOVE sighs for bliss, but sighs in vain;
Yearns for the Heaven it cannot gain;
Its ecstasy is agony;
Hopes fade while yearnings still remain.

With eyes on Heaven's mystic veil,
Faith bows where sight and reason fail,
When hopes and fears, 'mid smiles and tears,
The lone, world-wearied heart assail.

Faith finds, when sorrow's night is done,
A fairer world from chaos won:
Each atom, rife with glowing life,
Aspiring toward a brighter sun!

Such love and faith were his whose soul
In each fair fragment saw the whole;
Eternal grace in beauty's face,
Love where eternal æons roll.

What though before his vision strayed
The semblance of a mortal maid,
Her love-lit face was Heaven's own grace
To eyes that sought and heart that prayed.

More graceful than the cypress high,
With cheeks that with fresh rose-buds vie,
With loosened hair that scents the air,
She flits across the starlit sky.

On moon-paved walks his ear would greet
The soft fall of her silvery feet,
On visioned heights 'mid starry lights
In speechless trance their souls would meet.

With lips that made the ruby wan,
And paled the light of Badakshan,
Enveiled she came in roseate flame
Inwove of sunset and of dawn.

And when upon his love she smiled,
To soothe his yearnings vague and wild,
That smile was given, as light from Heaven,
To soul by passion undefiled.

Then hopes and fears, and love's soft woes,
And yearnings sought and found repose
In the soft snare of beauty's hair
All redolent of musk and rose.

Ah ! then in words that pant and pine
To breathe a rapture all divine,
Hope and despair find solace rare,
As in a cup of charmed wine.

And in that cup his love can trace
The mystery of the loved one's face,
Can read the glance that doth enhance
Each dream-like charm, each visioned grace.

Still in fair Shiraz blooms the rose,
Where Rukni's murmuring water flows ;
Mosalla's bowers recall the hours
When beauty smiled on love's soft woes;

And o'er them all the glamour lies
Of love's fond dream of beauty's eyes ;
The charmed air that wanders there,
Is of the blooms of Paradise.

Though, Shiraz, on thy flowery side,
Where laughing, moonlit waters glide,
The cypress sways, the rose displays,
Such charms as in love's memory bide;

Though violets sigh into the air,
Kissed by the glancing star-beams fair;
Yet fairer far than flower or star
Thy Poet's soul that lingers there!

An Echo of Persian Song

OH, the joy of youth
And the dream of love!
Have ye fled with the days of yore
When the earth below
And the heavens above
The smile of their Maker wore?

Then the days shone bright
And my heart became
A garden like Eden fair,
And the Night's still voice
To my being came
As bliss on the moonlit air.

Then the Nightingale
To the Rose did sing
Love's woes that her heart opprest
And the Rose sighed forth
To the breath of Spring
The perfume of love in her breast.

Like the Rainbow's arch
Rose the wings of my dream
'Twixt earth and the realms above,
Till all forms of life
In that arch did seem
God's tokens of grace and love.

Then my heart was thrilled
With a strange delight—
Soft pain and a sweet unrest,
And each thrill in my soul
Was a blossom bright
Unfolding within my breast!

Who will bring that dream
To my heart again ?
Who'll show me that garden fair !
Who will echoes bring of the joyous strain
That came on the moonlit air ?

Who can tell me where
Is that magic flower
That breathed of the promise of love
To the Nightingale
When the moon did shower
Love's light from the heaven above ?

Let the Seeker seek,
He shall find them still ;
His quest, it shall never be vain.
Though the fading eye
May have lost its skill,
Yet the heart, it shall find them again.

Yearning

WHAT bringest thou, O haunting dream ?
What message from the fields of sleep ?
Vain visions that but beauteous seem
And leave the vacant heart to weep ?

Or bring'st thou with life's morn again
Life's promised gifts from realms above—
Eternal beauty's smile, the strain
Undying of eternal love ?

If it be Beauty's transient smile
And love that makes the spirit weak
Frail joys that heart and soul beguile,—
'Tis not the boon that I would seek.

Such joys beguiled until there came
Remembrance of the Soul's deep woe—
The dark shade lurking in the flame,
Enshrined within its golden glow.

Such fleeting joys can please no more
When to the heart its woe does seem
A longing for some bliss in store—
When earthly life is but a dream.

Bring me that tranquil joy, that peace
That waits for me beyond the skies,
That, when all sense-illusions cease,
I shall within me realise!

The Seeker

LIFE is to him a dream of love
Amidst a desert wild;
Faith spreads around him from above
Her beauty undefiled.

The desert blooms from end to end,
Blooms like a garden fair;
And on his ravished sense descend
Borne on the fragrant air,

Such songs as choirs of angels sing
Unto the spirits blest,
Or birds at morn to greet the spring
With rapture-heaving breast.

He sees afar a rainbow gleam
That spans the heavens above,
And to his gaze each flower doth seem
Instinct with life and love.

The rose may blush his eyes to greet,
The lily's virgin bloom
May bend in coyness at his feet—
The jessamine sigh perfume—

But none of these have charm or power
His roving eyes to stay,
He looks to find love's Mystic Flower
Beyond Life's trodden way!

He seeks some boon his soul has lost
And never more may see.
Ne'er ends his quest though hope be crost
And joy be agony!

He wanders forth into the night
When hearts more tranquil sleep;
On his no soothing slumbers light,
Who still must vigil keep.

Awhile the skies and stars above
With hopeful message shine,
That makes the agony of love
A promised bliss divine.

He seeks within their depths alone
Some message for love's heart,
Some faith as light of life unknown,
That never shall depart.

And oft he breathes into the air,
Where none his accents hear,
His heart's sad song, his soul's soft prayer—
His yearning hope and fear.

Thus silence soothes when grief assail,
And to his heart is given
The voice the love-lorn Nightingale
Received from favouring heaven.

Regret

HIS heart still pines for what has been
And what again may never be,
Some charm, that made each common scene
Of life a heavenly mystery.
Some light that ere it ceased to shine
Made life and all the world divine

And life was then a vision fair
When first it dawned upon his sight.
New stars shone through the crystal air,
New moons gave to the heavens a light
That gleamed awhile, then ceased to shine,
Merged in His splendour more divine

He breathed a life of purer air.
He dwelt 'neath calmer, brighter skies
And heaven and earth serenely fair
Held out to him some magic prize,
Revealed to Faith some mystic sign
That made the Universe divine.

He sighs for that with vain regret,
He prays that time may leave behind
Some dreams that he may ne'er forget,
Some visions that he yet may find.
For love and faith shall ne'er decline
While life still owns a source divine.

Beauty and Song

BRIGHT though the stars that shine above
To deck the midnight skies,
And bright though to the eyes of love
The loved one's loving eyes ;

And beauteous though dawn's rosy hue,
And fair the flowers that blow;
Yet there's a beauty hid from view,
That in the soul doth glow.

Sweet though the waters' murmuring sound,
The sighing of the breeze,
Sweet though the songs of birds resound
From spring-awakened trees,

Yet there's a music sweeter still
The pensive soul to please;
Its notes, unheard, the bosom thrill
With finer joys than these.

Inspiration

I GAZE upon the stars of night,
Those wondrous worlds above
That shine with a diviner light
Upon the eyes of love.
And in my heart I own the power
Of all that is divine,
When heav'n in beauty deigns to shower
On me its grace benign.

I gaze upon the budding Rose,
The glory of the Spring.
Though prisoned in her garden-close,
Her breath is on the wing;
It glides into the heart of Love
And thrills it with the wine
Of some new joy from heaven above,
As from a cup divine!

Mirage

A DREAMER lost in dreams of bliss—
His spirit ranging near and far,
Till life and love seem all amiss,
And hope shines like a distant star;

A weary waste around him lies,
A dreary tract of sand and thorn;
Then from its very heart arise
Bright streams whose banks green palms adorn!

Along their gliding course are seen
Blue lakes on which the sunbeams dance
Peace dwells upon their margents green
Beauty where'er his eyes may glance.

A while before his 'raptured gaze
This visioned fairy prospect lies—
And then 'tis all an empty haze
O'er which the fading vision dies!

The Final Hope

WHAT though the bloom of life be gone
And Love's ungathered flowers decay?
What though the promise of the dawn
Be clouded at the close of day?
What though delusive Hope that shone
Like some far planet's fitful ray,
Hath now her flick'ring beams withdrawn
Lone seeker, from thy weary way?

The heart where Love hath built its bower
To dwell with thee in shade and shine;
The Faith that ne'er will own the power
Of secret sorrows that repine—
As perfume of a faded flower,
As memory of a light divine—
These live beyond the passing hour
And in life's travails still are thine!

Visionary Gleams

Beauty*

MY spirit roamed from flower to flower,
The fairest of this earth;
Lived 'mongst the stars at midnight hour;
Hailed morning's glorious birth.

By mystic founts whence Beauty springs
It lingered with delight,
Drank of the joy that Nature brings
As music, love, and light.

The Awakening

MY soul is awakened, it welcomes life's boon;
A presence surrounds it—an ocean of light.
At each end of the day, in the night and the noon
It shines from the stars and the sun and the moon.

In these symbols of light when Thine attributes shine
To show me Thyself in Thy glory revealed,
O Power of goodness, O Beauty divine!
I am in Thee, and with Thee; my being is Thine.

The Poet's Love

THE Poet's love, it knoweth not
What it must seek, what it hath sought:
Some boon long-promised, long-denied
To yearnings still unsatisfied.

*First intimation of Ideal Beauty in 1889.

Nature's Signs

THE soul of man finds beauty
In all that God has made ;
His eyes behold a splendour
Around Life's course displayed.
What wonders of Creation.
His vagrant path surround !
What gleams of joy eternal
Flash from the worlds around !
When he has gazed upon them,
And gazed upon them long,
His love and joy and wonder
Seek utterance in Song.

Exile

A MILLION worlds, but none my home
Below, around, above ;
A spark of Light unseen, I roam
Upon the wings of Love.

I wander near, I wander far,
My wings are unconfined ;
They flash unseen from star to star
With movements of His Mind !

We Two

ALL heaven and earth, and sun and moon and star,
And air and water, rock and tree and flower,
All things around me, all things near and far,
Are they not Thine and mine, O bounteous Power ?

As Thou hast made me Thine, art Thou not mine
Since I began—till time shall cease to be ?
Enough this wealth for me that I am Thine
And Thou art mine for all eternity !

The Star Beyond the Sky

WHEN grief and care invade thy breast
And there is tumult in thy soul,
Look inward—there's a haven of rest
Beyond endeavour's utmost goal.

In doubt and sorrow's dreary night
When no fair star-beam greets the eye,
Look upward to the Source of light—
There is a star beyond the sky !

Lost Paradise

THERE shines a light beyond the stars
In its eternal prime ;
Beyond the mystic gate that bars
The fateful flight of Time.

A shadow of that light doth fall
Upon the Seer's eyes
And far-heard melodies recall
The soul's lost Paradise.

To Him

THY will doth move Creation
Life is Thy light divine,
Thy Power is veiled in Beauty;
Round me its graces shine.

I yield to Thee my being
When here my course is run,
I'll come to Thee rejoicing
When here my task is done.

Time

"I LAY in dust the might of man,
His proudest works o'erthrow;
I teach great Empires in their fall
My fatal breath to know."

All this, O Time! thou canst, and more;
But there's this doom for thee:
When I am gone thy reign is o'er,
For me thou'lt cease to be.

Spirit of Beauty

THE Spirit of Beauty breathes over the world,
Flows on to the stars from the Source of all light;
From the sun to the moon are its wide wings unfurled,
O'erspreading the regions of day and of night.

As the life-breath of Truth and of Goodness divine
Pervading Creation in every part,
It descends from the Power whose mysteries shine
Through the veil of the eyes on the Seer's heart.

Hope

SHE hails from far the coming ray
Of light that lurks in gloom;
In garbage festering in decay,
The promised rose's bloom.

She seeks the good that lies concealed
Within the ills of life
Till to the heart of Faith's revealed
The peace that's born of strife.

Illusion

A glance, a lightning from within,
A memory of haunting eyes
That waken longings set at rest
And bid vain visions rise.

Hovering a while, now near, now far,
They mock the baffled sight
And then like ghosts they fade away,
Half sadness, half delight!

One in All

TO live in all that God has made
In earth and air and sky—
In rock and sand, in bud and blade
In all things, low and high

Through which life's mystic current runs,
In divers forms one power;
In atoms as in blazing suns,
In man and worm and flower;

To live in all and thus to know
There is one life in all,
One will that makes e'en darkness glow,
And planets rise and fall.

God in His Kingdom

SELF-BEING self-contained, around it thrown
The Universe—a Kingdom boundless-vast;
A Will, a Power pervasive, One-in-All
A changeless Now, no future and no past!

That Kingdom law and order, justice, grace,
Where hid beneath the garb of wrong is right;
Where measured time by measured stages runs,
And distance marks the limit of our sight.

Therein the human soul, a speck of light,
Floats as a conscious unit part-confined,
Yet free as whole, with power of choice endowed
To quit surrounding darkness and to find

Itself as Truth,—remerging, yet alone,
In that which is Self-truth, Self-being all,
In that vast Kingdom where all suns and moons
And stars and planets float and rise and fall.

Marks of the Maker's Hand

WHAT wondrous worlds, to sight denied,
Behind all forms we see!
Atoms unknown expanding wide
Into Infinity!

Made and perfected by a Will,
Each in itself a World
Ordained some purpose to fulfil,
In mystic semblance furled.

Though far and fast life's visions fly,
And faint the glimpse they yield,
Still let me trace in earth and sky
The Maker's love revealed.

Let faith be mine, and certainty,
And Love, my heart's demand,
That in creation I may see
Marks of the Maker's hand!

Man

FOR me all earth and heaven,
For me Creation's plan.
For me to whom Thou'st given
Thy breath and made me Man,

All-knowing Thou, all-seeing,
From Thee hath come my light:
This soul—which is my being,
This Mind—which is my sight.

To forms Thou art life-giving;
Dost form to will impart.
And in each form that's living
I live—a feeling heart!

In every breathing creature,
In beast and bird and worm,
In Life's minutest feature
That doth Thy will affirm;

In tree and leaf and flower,
In rock and sand and grass,
In gentle breeze and shower,
In storms that whirling pass.

All-knowing and all-seeing!
I'm woven in Thy plan.
Sent out of infinite being
To live on earth as Man!

The Spirit's Home

NOT here, not here the Spirit's home;
A million worlds above
Invite the wanderer to roam
On wings of love.

How near what seems to thee afar,
Wert thou but unconfined!
A glint thou, and each shining star,
Of but one Mind.

Rise and on soaring wings traverse
Wide realms without a name.
The freedom of God's Universe
Is thine to claim.

The Spirit

IN forms to which God's will gave birth
Here and beyond the sun,
My spirit sees in heaven and earth
The All-pervading One.

Who

WHO breathes into matter the spirit—
The power to move and control ?
Who raises life higher and makes it
Self-knowing, percipient as soul ?

Who gives all her functions to Nature,
Makes laws which she needs must obey ?
Who gives man his far-seeing wisdom
To guide on the righteous way ?

Who robes Creation in beauty ?
Who gives us the heart that can love ?
Who binds us to all life around us,
Yet leads to the Highest above ?

The Sacred Fire

THE sacred fire within the heart,
The light that glows within the soul—
If aught their fervour can impart,
Yet passion's tumult can control
It is the Poet's breathing Lyre
Whose thrilling strains to Heaven aspire.

Once heard, as from some visioned height,
Time's ceaseless wings those strains prolong,
Still wafting from the realms of Light
Faint echoes of Immortal Song.
The Poet bending o'er his Lyre,
Must keep alive The Sacred Fire.

Recluse

RIGHTLY to live, the soul can find its way,
E'en through the densest darkness unto light;
Cleave ills that thwart by malice and despite
Love when it seeks life's discords to allay;
Unseen of men, undaunted, undeterred,
Serene amid lost faiths and hopes deferred,
Endure unvanquished till the promised Day.

Reverie

LOST in thought she sits, and lonely,
Brooding o'er life's joy and pain;
Seeking in her heart's recesses
Memory-pictures that remain.
"Kinsmen gone and friends departed—
Shall we ever meet again
Or in body or in spirit
Somewhere on the ethereal plane?"

Where are now those kindly faces,
Where are now the ministering hands
That once blessed her careless childhood?
Holy shades in happier lands!
Parents, brethren pass before her—
Fleeting forms in shadowy bands,
Every soul its message wafting
To her soul that understands.

Remembrance

WHEN the lost scenes of childhood
Rush back on our sight,
From the shadows of memory
Once more into light,

Then the heart is awakened,
The past lives again,
And gives us some treasures
That hidden remain.

The best of life's blessings
That faded erstwhile
Return when lost faces
Once more on us smile!

Life to be

THY youth was but a mask for age;
Thy growth concealed decay.
Then let not Time thy thoughts engage;
Beyond it lies thy way.

Nor Time nor Fate has power to give
Thy dead self back to thee.
Rise from the dead, and learn to live
The life that is to be.

Solitude

WITH hopes defeated, heart dismayed,
From scenes where gilded follies throng,
Where life is but a masquerade
And pleasure but a siren-song,

She fled; her weary footsteps strayed
Far over plain and mountain-side—
A pensive, way-worn, weary maid
Without a friend, without a guide.

She sought in wilds, on heights forlorn
Where Nature holds her silent reign,
The charm of peace for heart outworn
With nameless woes and numbed with pain.

Hers was the secret pain that's born
Within the heart of pleasures cloyed:
False pleasures that no more adorn,
But make life's scene a dismal void.

Peace came to her, by Nature brought
In answer to her earnest call.
God gave her all her bosom sought—
The lasting rest that endeth all !

Memory

WHEN sunshine from the soul has fled,
When life has lost its bloom
Some light within us still remains
Hid in life's closing gloom.

At eve when Nature sinks to rest,
When twilight falls around,
When on the darkening air has died
The echo of each sound ;

At midnight when the moon's pale beams
Lie soft o'er hill and dale,
And to the heedless air complains
The lonely Nightingale.........

Ah, then will memory recall
To love's sad heart, and lone,
Some vanished face, some kindly smile,
Some long-lost tender tone.

The Pilgrim

O PILGRIM in the vale of years!
The day is fading fast.
Why dost thou loiter on the way?
How long will twilight last?

The day is fading fast, he sighed,
My weary steps are slow,
The shades are gathering overhead,
But I've not far to go.

Awhile I loiter by the way
To think where I have been
And trace again in memory
The vision of each scene.

A darkening vale before me lies;
But from yon high incline,
When I have reached it, I shall see
The nearing home lights shine.

Toward Light

WHEN darkness falls on thee,
When all the earth is dark—
The heavens are bright!
Go, look at plant and tree,
And how they're growing, mark,
Up toward the light!
Thy life has joy and woe,
The earth has day and night;
Wait till thou find—
When thou hast learnt to grow
From darkness unto light—
Peace for thy mind.

Adieu—A Premonition*

I WATCH life fading, and the world grows dim.
I watch,—the twilight darkens, night is near.
I hold the cup you once filled to the brim—
Still, still, to find in it some drops that cheer.

I watch,—the moon is setting; starbeams shower
Around my cold bare brow their waning light.
My hand still holds your gift—a fading flower—
Still, still it breathes of you in sad delight!

Immortality

I FEEL myself merged in Thy will,
Though still an entity apart;
Though conscious still and self-contained,
A disembodied mind and heart.

*To a friend far away, who died before this reached him.

Not bounded or by space or time,
As earths and skies and seasons are,
I float in Thine immensity—
Above, beyond Sun, Moon and Star!

'Tis of the essence of my soul,
The inborn longing, thus to be;
I soar beyond the bounds of life
To taste of immortality!

Myth and Truth

Myth and Truth

*'In me tota ruens Venus Cypron deseruit'**

"FOR me fair Venus once again
Forsakes her Cyprian bowers,
Attended by her joyous train
Of rosy-bosomed Hours.

For me she quits Cytherian groves,
And bright Olympian skies,
And with a thousand winged Loves
Unto her votary flies.

Lo! scattering roses on the ground,
The laughing Hours advance;
The Graces fair, with zones unbound,
Lead forth the mazy dance

Which Nymphs entwining, weave around
The footsteps of their Queen
Whom frolic Loves and Sports surround,
And Jests with radiant mien.

Come, boy, now let the censer glow,
And fragrant fumes arise,
And bring the fairest flowers that blow
To greet the goddess' eyes!

Now let the myrtle and the rose
About my temples twine,
When from the brimming cup o'erflows
The foaming, sparkling wine!"

Like him who chose the Grecian lyre
To strike a borrowed string,
Such themes could once my heart inspire
And move my lips to sing.

*Horace: "Venus deserts Cyprus and hastens towards me."

It was in youth's unguarded hour
When fancy ruled the heart;
Now fancy's dreams have lost their power,
Her visions fair depart.

Now deeper passions of the soul
Life's darker depths reveal,
And grim realities control
And teach my heart to feel.

I see mankind before me stand,
Bent 'neath the load of years,
Where sterner deities command
Their laughter and their tears.

Sappho and Aphrodite*

"WITH silent vows and suppliant heart I kneel
Before the altar in thy sacred shrine.
O Goddess! come, and to my heart reveal
A woman's heart, not majesty divine.
Nay, not those blinding beams of light that shine
Immortal forms from mortal eyes to screen,
But pity's grace. Let woman's heart incline
To woman's prayer." She prays and lists between . . .
The odorous fumes dispart........a shadowy form is seen.

Lo! from the Goddess' eyes a wondrous fire,
Half-veiled by tremulous lids, sends forth a ray
That shines propitious on her heart's desire,
As on an opening bud the sunbeams play.
Love's Goddess she, yet taught to own the sway

*An imitation, by way of exercise, attempted in 1894.

Of love's despair, bends o'er her suppliant lone;
Sighs, and her bosom (joyless since the day
Joy with Adonis to the shades had flown)
Heaves as with human pain, and passions not un-
known.

Is it a dream, this vision of delight?
The votaress gazes on that from supreme;
She dare not turn to save her aching sight,
She dare not stir, or she might lose her dream.
O for a breath, a world! But speech doth seem
Dead in her heart and throat; 'tis all in vain
That moaning murmur........ for a fiery stream
Flows through and through her heart; her reeling
brain
By anguish'd joy o'erwrought, she sinks beneath
the strain ..

Fainting she sinks. O but to touch those feet—
Those soft white feet which erstwhile had the power
To quicken Paphos' earth which rose to greet
The seaborn Queen with many a newborn flower!
O but to clasp those soft white feet and shower
Kisses upon them till sweet death should quell
Love, hope, despair! The long, wished for hour
Has come......but now.......her heart is spent
her breath,
And every sense is hushed. Is it a trance or death?
Far, in a dream, she sees a chariot roll
Away dove-drawn to Paphos, and a strain
Slow wafted comes to waken in her soul
A bliss unknown. Then as in dewy rain
A drooping bud revives, she wakes again.
"Thy heart, my Sappho! is Love's sacred shrine;
There find the recompense thou seek'st to gain.
Thou needest not Love's gifts, Love needeth thine,
Whose touch awakes the strings of Phoebus'
Lyre divine!'

' Soles occidere et redire possunt. ' *

—Catullus.

O HEART of lyric Love, why mourn
That life must soon be o'er ;
That when the taper is outworn
Its light returns no more ?

Why mourn that though the setting sun
Will soon regain his light,
We mortals when our course is run
Must sleep in endless night.

That sleep but wears the mask of death ;
' Tis not an endless night
' Tis life, but not as living breath ;
' Tis darkness turned to light.

' Sunt aliquid manes ; Letum non omnia finit ' †

—Propertius.

" THE shades survive, death ends not all. "
This lore the lover learnt
When his beloved was past recall,
And Cynthia's ashes burnt.

Sad Poet ! Thus 'twas thine to know
The power that conquers Death—
As Love, not in the heart of woe
But in the heart of Faith !

---

*Suns set and rise but we sink in endless night.

†The shades remain, death does not finish all.

A Hint

'Credi mihi non ulla tuae'st medicina figuræ,
*nudus amor forman non amat artificem.'**
—Propertius.

LET other beauties seek to shine
With gaudy charms that art supplies;
And haply other hearts than mine
Their foolish flaunting charms may prize.

But Cynthia, thou unrivalled queen
Of Love, of Beauty, and of Grace,
What need of gems or silken sheen
To make—or mar—thy form or face?

Let other beauties seek to gain
What other eyes and lips can give:
False admiration with its train
Of flattering follies that deceive.

To one who scorns all vulgar praise
These never can a joy impart;
Better than lewd eyes' wanton gaze
The homage of one faithful heart.

To the Same

HAST thou marked the lights that glimmer
On a cloudless summer sky—
How in splendour with each other,
How in varied charm they vie?
How each from the other's beauty
Draws away the admiring eye?
Thus, from one fair to another,
Cynthia! still my heart was drawn,
Following still the one whose visage
With the fairest lustre shone.

*Believe me there is no need to adorn thy beauty
Love is unclad and does not like a form that is embellished.

Hast thou watched the Moon ascending
Slow, majestic, calm and bright,
Silvering o'er the dim horizon
Where the sky and earth unite—
How she drowns each struggling starbeam
In a flood of dazzling light?
Cynthia! thus, thy sovereign beauty
Shamed each lesser rival's art,
And thy charm, so fine and subtle,
Fixed for once my roving heart.

Ecstasy

WHEN o'er thy brow and in thine eyes
And round those roseate lips of thine
So like the beams on morning skies,
The dawning smiles of gladness shine,
My trembling spirit, while I gaze
Is lost bewildered in a maze
Of nameless longings, till it seems to be
Merged in thy being and a part of thee!

And when thou dost all hearts enthrall
With tones that pitying love disclose;
When soothing accents lightly fall
From them, as petals from a rose;
Or when some rapture-breathing note
Exultant swells thy linnet-throat,
My spirit harkens to some heavenly sound
That fills with joy the trembling air around.

And when before my pensive eye
Some sweet-sad yearning heaves thy breast,
My soul doth mingle with each sigh
That flutters in that hallowed nest;

And when soft Pity's gem—a tear
Hangs trembling in thine orbs so clear,
My heart doth melt and eagerly doth seek
To be that drop to trickle down thy cheek.

But when serene thy visage beams,
Intent on some far vision bright
Of purer brighter worlds, meseems
Thou art a portion of that light
Unseen which blest immortals share
In regions of diviner air.
Ah! then my soul doth know that love was given
To bid it soar and find its way to Heaven!

Sappho

SAPPHO! Who could immortalise
The passionate heart of love,
Couldst thou not bid love's passion rise
Into the light above—
Where Love is but the Soul's desire
And passions cease to be,
Sublimed by Faith's undying fire
To immortality?

The longings of th' aspiring heart
For something still unknown,
The hopes that even to death impart
A glory all their own—
Such faith was it not thine to know?
Such hopes, were they not thine?
I hear from far thy wail of woe
Untouched by breath divine.

But nay, what mortal heart can know
The secret of thy soul:
The hopeless anguish of that woe
Beyond thy gods' control?
Thy voice,—a hopeless heart's desire,
A meteor in its flight;
Thy sobs and sighs were songs of fire,
All melody and light.

I'd fain believe 'twas thine to see
Before thy soul took flight,
Some sign of love's eternity
Foreshadowed in Love's light.
Say, did such light upon thee shine
Ere yet Leucadia's* wave
Closed o'er those quivering limbs of thine,
Too late, alas! to save?

A Tribute to Horace

"I'LL strike the stars with head sublime
If high amongst the lyric throng
A place I find
By thee assigned!"
So sang an ancient son of song.

"In shady groves of blossomed lime
I saw the Nymphs and Satyrs throng,
And in the van
Was sylvan Pan
Who fluted to my Roman song.

*Sappho is said to have leaped from the Leucadian hill into the sea because of her unrequited love for Phaon.

The chorus danced the glades along,
Crushing the perfume from the thyme;
They heard full fain
My Lesbian strain—
Unheard before in Roman song.

Bring ivy wreaths in verdant prime,
That to the poet's brow belong.
They'll make me vie
With the gods on high,
Me, foremost lyrist of Roman song!"

That strain triumphant floats along,
Adown the corridor of Time.
Thy proud notes thrill
Our bosoms still,
O lyrist proud of Roman song.

Not thine the passions, fierce, sublime,
That to the Lesbian's lyre belong,
Who ne'er could tame
Her heart of flame
That blazed into her soaring song.*

Nor thine such love as was her crime,
Whose love was agony keen and long,
Who long had borne
Love's silent scorn
With heart-ache in her voice of song.

Me, dweller in a distant clime,
Thy Roman voice has made more strong
Even for the strife
Of worldly life
By maxims woven into song.

---

*Sappho.

I loved thee in life's ardent prime;
I love thee when no longer young.
Still let thy lyre
Calm joys inspire,
Of strength and wisdom blent with song.

Occasional
Pro Rege et Patria

ODE

The Awakening of the East

FROM East to West the orb of Day
Through boundless æther wheels his flight;
And then relumes with quiv'ring ray
The shadow-haunted realm of Night
And lo! the brightest gems adorn
The brow of fresh-awakened Morn.
She wears once more a pure and roseate glow,
And the fairest flowers that blow
Her bosom deck and on her lap are strewn.
And, from her lofty, glist'ring throne,
Her hand, with sovereign bounty scatters round
Fair Nature's precious gifts upon the smiling ground.

So in the past thy light divine
From East to West, O Heavenly Wisdom! sped,
And as Night flees before sunshine,
So from man's heart the shades of darkness fled.
First in the East Religion rose,
That dared the gates of Heaven unclose;
First in the East heav'n-eyed Philosophy
Taught the Soul how to be free
From earthly trammels which the senses bind
About her wings when, unconfined,
She fain would take her daring upward flight
And soar in cloudless realms of Empyrean light.

Westward they moved with radiant mien,
Hopeful, steadfast and serene;
Night and Chaos passed away
And proudly rose the new-born Day.
Then Law and Justice and the gentle Arts
That Peace to noble life imparts,
Ruled in those glens where Superstition trod,
And hailed the new-found light that owned an unknown God!

And Nations rose and States were planned
And gorgeous Cities built, and far and wide
Fair Europe over sea and land
Unfurled the banner of her power and pride;
And o'er dark regions, once unknown,
The glimm'ring light of Faith was thrown:
The hungry savage left his quiv'ring prey—
Learnt to tremble and obey
All lost, the while, in dreams of bygone days,
The East looked on with heedless gaze
Upon her youthful rival's growing power,
And dreaming, still looked on—and lost the precious hour.

Awake! arise! With throbbing breast
And wistful eyes she views the path before;
Sighs for the past—and from the West
Seeks to relearn her long-forgotten lore.
Behold! from Neptune's sunset strand
The generous West her guiding hand
Doth o'er the far-resounding waves extend,
As a sister, as a friend,
To share with her the gifts herself hath won
From earth and heaven while the sun
Through labour-crowded centuries hath rolled—
Rich gifts, more precious far than India's gems and gold.

A fairer dawn with brighter ray—
Herald of a glorious day—
O'er the far horizon's rim
Dissolves the ling'ring shadows dim.
Behold what gorgeous-winged visions rise
And sail athwart the sapphire skies!
What glowing forms, that godlike semblance wear,
What heav'n-aspiring strains float on the sunlit air!

Voice of the past that silently
Has stirred within my country's bosom long,
Voice of the future, proud and free
In one loud strain their blended notes prolong
Come forth ye wise and good and brave
From out the cradle and the grave!
The spell is broke, and from the fading gloom
Of the dark and silent tomb
Bursts forth, arrayed in all the light of thought,
Each soul that deathless work hath wrought;
Leaps from the cradle too a fearless band
To hail the mighty dead—the guardians of the land.

'Tis theirs, the song; 'tis theirs, the light
That fills the air with triumph, gilds the sky.
It swells more proudly, burns more bright
And pure, Britannia, 'neath thy favouring eye.
Britannia! thou by Heaven's decree
The Foster-mother of the free,
Thou deemed, in every age and every clime,
Nurse of patriot hopes sublime,
Nurse of high thought and deeds of high emprize,
Nurse of the brave, the just, the wise,
Smile on their sunrise songs, for they are thine,
Who bidst the Past revive, the Future's glories shine

Shall fainter grow that melody,
Lost in long futurity?
Fading slow, those visions gay
In the far distance die away?
Ah, no! that music fails not though mine ear
Its distant warblings fail to hear;
Those visions fade not though my failing sight
See not their lights ahead, that burn for ever bright.

The Imperial Coronation at Delhi, 1911*

ONCE more yon ancient gates unbar;
Undo once more the mould'ring chains that bind!
Hark, o'er the Western waves afar
What joyous strains come floating on the wind!
Queen of the East! no longer mourn
Thy broken sword, thy laurels torn,
Thy sceptre vanished, and the gem
That once adorned thy diadem.
See'st thou? The clouds of ages roll away
And brightly shines the rising day.
Long-faded scenes for which thy heart did yearn,
From out the Past arise and to thine eyes return.

No longer mourn o'er crumbling piles,
That there the mighty Moghul once bore sway—
Those spots where lingering Glory smiles,
And spectral Grandeur clothed in ruin gray.
Behold! Upon thy monarchs' throne
Sits one whose heart is all thine own.
Let him a nobler seat obtain—
Take him into thy heart to reign!
A King—a man who neither pomp nor power
Doth value, nor the glitt'ring shower
Of gold and gems the gorgeous Orient brings
To scatter at the feet of her barbaric kings.

'Twas with fierce-eyed War's alarms,
And with Conquest's gory arms
That the Macedonian came;
Ghazni sent her plundering horde,

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* Written in 1911 at the time of the Delhi Durbar. The poem had the good fortune to be read before Their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary soon after their Silver Jubilee.—*Ed.*

And proud Persia's bloody Lord*
  Came with famine, slaughter, flame.
But *he* brings love and liberty and peace
  Where'er he moves, and these his state attend.
They bid fell Discord her loud clamour cease,
  Learn to revere the master in the friend.
Soft mercy and calm justice wait
  Upon each act of sovereign power;
And wisdom from her ancient tower
  Bids truth hold high her searching light
All shades of evil to abate,
  And guide his steps aright,
Who brings with him Britannia's faith and love
  Vowed before man below, and vowed 'fore God above.
When, by the dire decree of Fate,
  A feeble prey to warring whirlwinds given,
Her rudder lost, thy Ship of State
  O'er dangerous shoals and treacherous rocks was driven,
'Twas then upon the Ocean wave
  Appeared the Ocean-Queen—to save.
She took from Neptune's trembling hand
  The Trident, sceptre of command;
She charmed the winds, she hushed the waters' roar,
  And steered thy battered bark ashore.
Swift at her frown the storm-clouds overhead
  Did shake their sable wings and, lightly scattered, fled.
Britannia's faith, Britannia's power
  Wide o'er the world victorious arms attest;
But Heaven bestows a nobler dower,
  By all the Graces and the Muses blest.
Of these immortal thoughts are born,
  And beauteous arts that life adorn,
Aspiring hopes that ills defy,

* Nadir Shah.

That raise, ennoble, sanctify.
Land of high thought !* still shall thine ancient Muse
A younger sister's hand refuse ?
Awake, arise ! and burst the bands of sleep ;
Feel thy dead bosom throb, and learn to smile and weep !

See yonder streak of roseate light,
Where gray Dawn and dusky Night
O'er the dim horizon meet.
There the shadows of the Past
With the Present mingling fast,
The rising Morn of Future greet.
The light of Knowledge spreads and Science gains
Victorious sway o'er fairy realms unknown ;
And with triumphant skill man's mind obtains
From Nature's heart the secrets she doth own.
When Virtue quelling passion's strife,
Has power to guide the chastened heart,
Then will the brood of Vice depart,
And Hope's dim eyes serenely shine.
Then will man deem his earthly life
A spark of Life Divine ;
Then Honour, Faith and Freedom, hand in hand,
Rule o'er the earth redeemed—warders of sea and land!

Look down from your high seats of bliss,
O Kings that once your country's sceptre swayed !
From starry spheres look down on this
Enchanted ground where once your footsteps strayed
But yesterday each haunted spot
Yearned for the voice that answered not ;
To-day the very echoes ring
With hopeful greetings from the King.

* India.

Behold, where yonder battlements extend
  What gorgeous scenes from heaven descend!
The Past reborn! 'Tis Akbar's voice sublime
  Rolls forth from golden clouds and fills the vault of Time.

" All hearts that truth and justice own,
  All hearts that monarchs' merits seek to scan,
Behold yon seat—an Empire's throne;
  Yon man—the Guardian of the rights of man!
By Fate and wisdom's magic art
  His throne rests on the human heart;
Upheld, not by the hand of power,
  Nor for a fleeting, dubious hour,
But for all time by glorious heritage
  Of noble deeds from age to age,
Of pure unselfish thoughts whose currents run,
  A bright unsullied stream, from noble sire to son.

Power may sink, and grandeur wane;
  Yet will noble deeds remain
Through eternity.
  When life's glitt'ring shows depart,
Generous love that swayed the heart
  Will still life's deathless record be.
All-hail O King! within whose generous breast
  Long-gathered rays of quenchless virtue shine,
We yield to thee the power we once possesst,
  To thee the sceptre of the heart resign

Bold in thy virtue, walk the earth
  Life's noblest mission to fulfil:
Exalt the good, subdue the ill
  Until regenerate nations own
A second and a higher birth,
  And blessings erst unknown.

Thus, spreading hope and joy and peace around
Move on thy destined course, with nations' blessings crowned ! "

India to England, 1914*

O ENGLAND ! in thine hour of need,
When Faith's reward and Valour's meed
Is death or glory ;
When Fate indites, with biting brand
Clasped in each warrior's stiff'ning hand,
A Nation's story ;

Though weak our hands, which fain would clasp
The warrior's sword with warrior's grasp
On Victory's field ;
Yet turn, O mighty Mother ! turn
Unto the thousand hearts that burn
To be thy shield.

Thine equal justice, mercy, grace,
Have made a distant alien race
A part of thee.
'Twas thine to bid their souls rejoice,
When first they heard the living voice
Of Liberty.

Unmindful of their ancient name—
Their fathers' honour, glory, fame—
And sunk in strife
Thou foundst them whom thy touch hath made
Men, and to whom thy breath conveyed
A nobler life.

* Published in the *London Times* on the day of the landing of the Indian troops at Marseilles, October, 1914.

They, whom thy love hath guarded long,
They, whom thy care hath rendered strong
In love and faith—
Their heart-strings round thy heart entwine;
They are, they ever will be thine,
In life—in death!

Belgium, 1914

"ARISE" she said "'Tis Honour's Law
Bids ye the patriot's sword to draw
And die upon the field."
Then like the Spartan mother saw
The warrior on his shield.

But deep within her heart of pride
What tears of tender passion bide,
What sacred sorrows start
For those who at her bidding died!
They rend a mother's heart.

Dark, darker grows Misfortune's hour—
Time's triumphs, ancient church and tower,
All, all are smoke and dust.
Is there on earth no friendly power?
Will Heaven forsake the just?

Nay, Right still lives to conquer Wrong,
The weak shall rise to face the strong
At love and honour's call.
Lo! England leads the noble throng
Who'll stand by Right—or fall.

Brave hearts that for your country died,
In honour's glow, in manhood's pride,
Death was your field of fame.
Yon trodden turf shall never hide
The glory of your name.

Sleep there, and unforgotten sleep!
Your fame men's memory will keep
Undimmed in after years;
And lips that moan and eyes that weep
Will smile amidst their tears.

1914

WHEN fell 'the man of many thrones
Who strewed our earth with hostile bones,'*
Ambition's day was done.
His sun set on a dismal shore
In clouds of blood—unlike the sun
To rise no more.

Earth for her sons beneath the sod,
Had oft invoked the curse of God
On him who wrought the wreck;
Heav'n heard, the spell of years was broke,
Fate fixed upon the Titan's neck
Her iron yoke.

The selfsame Wrong, the selfsame Right;
The patriot's fire, the warrior's might—
Are they not still the same?
When Wrong lifts high his arm again,
Shall Truth and Right invoke the name
Of God in vain?

He sees; He hears; and with a nod
He breaks the chain, He bends the rod
Ambition's red hands wield.
Right triumphs—'tis her sure reward—
When Wrong sinks on his battered shield
And broken sword.

---

* Byron's lines on Napoleon.

Indian Troops going to War, 1914

LOVE and Faith and Duty call.
England's honour summons all
By her side to stand or fall—
Makers of her history.

Let the Western foemen trace,
In your heart and in your face
Manhood of the Aryan race,
And its pristine chivalry.

Let your dauntless deeds attest
Nobly, proudly to the West
That within the Eastern breast
Throbs a heart as proud and free.

By you, at Britannia's side,
Be the banded world defied!
Yours the glory, yours the pride
There to conquer—or to die.

Honour lives from age to age,
Bright on Time's recorded page.
Be your sons' the heritage
Of a deathless memory!

The Turcos at Cambrai*

A SUDDEN halt: along the van,
Adown the rear from man to man
The thrilling whisper runs:
"The German lines are deep and long,
The German trenches strong,
Well guarded by their guns;
But *there* is glory for the brave—
The victor's fame, the hero's grave!"

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1. *Note.*—The following account appeared in one of the English papers, and was sent to me by an anonymous correspondent, with a request that it might be made the subject of a poem.—N.J.

"From this amiable American I also heard the story of the baptism of fire in Europe of the Turcos who have come from North Africa to help to fight the battles of France. In his wandering Mr. Chretien discovered the grave of the first Turcos who gave up their lives.

It was near Cambrai, during the great retreat from the Belgian frontier. A force of 500 Turcos had just been brought up to the firing line. There was a desperate piece of work to do; the safety of many thousands of men depended on its being done. It involved a charge up to the guns and against a strong line of trenches.

The Turcos were longing for battle; they were the first of their race to come up, and they wanted to be first into action. The order was given. The Turcos scarcely needed it. They swung round into a long line and faced the foe. Forward! And towards the foe they dashed, rushing like a whirlwind. Then the guns began to spit forth shells, and the rifle bullets swarmed around. Yet onward they went. The guns were silenced, and from the trenches the Germans fled.

A few French officers rode across the field, strewn now with corpses, to see how the work had been done. There, at the goal of the charge, they found only 12 survivors of the 500—and of the 12 only one was unwounded! Only one solitary man came through the tornado of death unscathed!

It is not difficult to imagine the tragic splendour of that charge. Near Cambrai those who fell in it are buried as they fought—shoulder to shoulder. It is a simple grave with two small crosses on it. It holds 538 gallant soldiers of France.

GEORGE RENWICK.

Not sons of France—her liegemen they,
  These swarthy men from Afric's coast.
The leader of the brave array
  With flashing weapon points the way:
"There lies the German host.
  Soldiers! you've faced a hundred times
The deadly levelled gun;
  Now show them how in sunnier climes
The soldier's work is done.

Forward!" yet scarce that sound had died
  When forth they rushed—a heaving tide
To hurl them on the foe.
  A hundred watchful gunmen saw
The angry tide below;
  A hundred sleeping guns awoke,
A hundred throats the silence broke;
  A deadly shower of shot and shell
Upon the advancing warriors fell—
  But checked not their advance.
On, on they pressed through blood and smoke
  To dare the very fiends of Hell
For Honour and for France.

Now, faster through the sulph'rous gloom,
  As still they onward stride,
There comes the fatal flash, the boom
  On which Death's minions ride.
But onward, onward, onward
  They strive with iron tread,
Heedless of all that wounded fall
  Beside them, or ahead.
Onward—they scale a ghastly wall:
  The dying on the dead!

Death ! 'Tis nothing to them now
In each breast and on each brow
Proud Hope and Faith
Have conquered Death
In Life's supremest strife,
Crowding in one moment's breath
A whole eternity of Life.

Five hundred or but one—
Numbers to them are nought :
One heart, one soul—they run
They rush upon the spot
Reckless of shell and shot,
Where gapes the muzzle hot
Of each death-dealing gun.
The foemen, one and all,
Now stagger, flee, or fall.
The glorious deed is done !

The deed is done—the trench is won ;
The victors—where are they ?
Of half a thousand daring men
The sole survivors—twelve or ten—
All gashed and bleeding lay.
The rest—in yonder field they sleep,
Where Faith and Honour vigil keep :
Beneath thy turf, Cambrai !

'Twas done, that dauntless, deathless deed,
Far from their native strand.
It was not for their race or creed,
But for an alien race,
A foreign land
Duty their life-blood did demand,
And Fate their doom decreed.
Each felt the land's disgrace
Worse than his death—
Each gave her at her need
A hero's breath.

High, high on Heaven's roll of fame,
Where angels write the hero's name,
Their names are writ! And shall the Muse
The tribute of her voice refuse
To those whose spirit was the same,
Though men of coarser clay,
As of the nobly-daring few,
The few that in Thermopylæ
All Persia's might withstood—
Where Fame's eternal laurel grew,
Well-watered with their blood?

1917-18

Love dies, and fiendish hate let loose
Marauds the ravaged land
Where, revelling in power's abuse,
Crime waves his bloody brand.

Still onward rolls a direful flood,
A crime-ensanguined sea;
The price of blood is paid in blood,
'Tis Nature's stern decree.

And hark! above the din of war,
The crash of falling thrones,
The shrieks, loud-echoing afar,
That savage freedom owns.

A nation's glory lost, its power
What barbarous hands now wield—
Till Peace shall hail her triumph's hour
Beyond the leaguered field!

A hundred years, a thousand years—
Drops in the sea of Time—
Lo! They are gone; love reappears,
And faith renews her prime

And nations met in brotherhood
Man's destiny fulfil;
And wisdom finds life's precious Good
Within the heart of Ill!

The Armistice, 1918

THY glory, England! shone before our eyes
From near and far;
And now it beams, from war-ensanguined skies,
A brighter star.

Where vanquished Fate with tardy wreaths doth crown
The victor's brow,
Not proud of triumph, but in fair renown
Triumphant thou.

O great in war! be greater yet in peace,
And guide aright
The nations' wildered will that strife may cease
And foes unite.

Be nobler than was Greece in wisdom's lore,
Than Rome in sway.
Let holier laurels than they ever wore
Be thine today.

Let power by mercy, and true liberty
By wisdom's art
Attune to love, when faith has made it free,
The world's sore heart.

'Tis not alone thy far-flung battle line
Will guard thy fame.
O let fair deeds, that prove thy power benign,
Exalt thy name!

On the admission of Indians to the British Army

BE ours the pride to do and dare
When England offers to our hand,
Even as a sacred trust to bear,
The sword that guards our native land!

That sword was ours when ours the power
And pride of sinewy hand and heart.
That sword we lost in evil hour—
Even with our manhood's nobler part.

Now England brings it, and the blade
Is brighter than it wont to be,
And England's fostering care has made
The hand that takes it firm and free.

'Tis hers, as with a mother's care,
To guard our nation's second youth;
The wrongs of ages to repair,
Rekindling Honour, Freedom, Truth.

'Tis ours with grateful hearts to own
The glorious guerdon she has brought,
Compelling fortune to atone
A hundred evils that were wrought.

We'll take it, wear it, nobly serve
With deeds the land from which we've sprung;
Serve her with might of blood and nerve—
Not with the valour of the tongue!

Who talks of rights as hire or fee;
Who'll take, and with a beggar's hand
All heedless of the infamy,
A bribe to guard his native land?

Who can love's sacred call withstand,
Or pause, by factious counsels led?
He, recreant, owns that in his land
Love, faith and chivalry are dead.

If such there be, O let him hide
His shame from Honour's scornful eye!
Such hearts as his shall never bide
Where blood runs warm and hearts beat high.

Not his the place where patriots throng,
Of nobler blood and prouder name;
Not his to swell his country's song
With far-heard echoes of its fame.

In Memoriam

His Majesty King George V, 1936

THE King is dead. But kingship never dies!
He showed the nations what a king should be
Not proud but firm, in self-denial wise,
And great without the pomp of majesty;

To reign in hearts, not by the sway of power,
But by a nobler talent—righteous will;
To stand self-balanced, and in trial's hour
By truth and goodness to subdue all ill;

To heed the signs and temper of the age,
And draw the powers of good around his throne;
With sympathy men's feelings to assuage,
And by a sense of right to guide his own.

A true king has these gifts, and he was one.
As such, his kingship lives, and it will be
A heritage for each succeeding son,
A hope enshrined in people's memory.

Elegy on the death of His Majesty King George V, 1936

A NATION mourns. Nay, let all nations mourn!
For he has passed like goodness from the Earth
Who in dark hours of trial nobly borne,
Looked up to Him Who tests a monarch's worth.

When powers of evil, leagued to ravage life,
Swept over Europe's breast, a whirlwind strong,
He, England's King, stood calm amidst the strife,
Assured of aid divine to conquer Wrong.

Stood as the heart of England, made her one
When factious counsels might have wrought her shame,
When in dim clouds that shadowed England's sun
Fate seemed to hold her glory and her fame.

'Twas not for land and gold he waged the fight;
He knew the prize of Peace, but would not yield
To dastards' terms when the high claim of right
Could only be adjudged upon the field.

With vision true he saw what was to be
The price of precious blood of martyrs slain:
Not Right's defeat but Honour's victory,
To save his nation from dishonour's stain.

He fought and won, raised freedom's banner high,
Saved England's pride of place and fair renown.
He healed the world's sore heart, spread far and nigh
By word and deed the glory of her crown.

Defender he of Faith, his breath restored
Men's faith in God and in the power of good.
While with a gentle hand he swayed the sword,
His heart did own all nations' brotherhood.

God made his Empire be, in storm and calm
The sheltering home of many a race and creed;
And made it, as a bulwark of Islam,
The hope of Moslims in the hour of need.

Sincere and modest, selfless, courteous, kind;
A true man in the person of a king;
A feeling heart, a finely balanced mind
Endowed with virtues that from conscience spring—

He had the sorrows of the world at heart;
The Empire's welfare claimed his parting breath.
Let him who played in life the noblest part
Now find a deathless meed of fame in death!

Foretokens of War 1936-1938

Satan's Revenge

'Indignatio facit versus'

I LOOKED into the world's unquiet heart,
That hell and heaven of conscious self, and saw
A being fairer than the dreams of art—
His glory, pride, and selfishness, his law.

"Art thou not he," I asked, "whose steps did guide
The angels once to bow before the Throne,
Ere yet thy faith was blasted by thy pride
Faith yet unsullied, pride as yet unknown?"

"There came betwixt my Master and my heart
That earthworm, Man new fashioned out of clay,
To whom I had to bow or else depart
An exile from the realms of lasting day.

My heart rebelled, flung out these words of scorn
Embittered by the vengeance I did feel:
What, I, a being of Heaven's radiance born
Before this uncouth clod of earth to kneel!

Is this thy justice, O thou Power Supreme!
Or, sport, to make us kneel before thy toy?
I know not what my fellow-angels deem,
But *my* allegiance, sure, it will destroy."

"Depart Our presence!" Words of doom that sound
Through time and space, eternal, infinite,
Pursuing him above, below the ground,
Ring through the skies and in Hell's deepest pit.

Tormented Exile! Restless spirit barred
From light which was the birthright of thy race,
Ah, whither now? On every side a guard
To bar access to Heaven's redeeming grace!

His only refuge was the heart of man,
To which by tempting wiles he found his way.
A useful guide in many a subtle plan,
Meek, unobtrusive in that cell he lay.

And man forgot the presence of his guest,
And thought all impulse from his Maker came.
Virtue and vice commingling in his breast
Were consecrated in his Maker's name.

The man was but the seeming outward form,
The fallen angel was the potent will
That drove the clay-worm on through calm and storm,
On smooth, on rugged paths of good and ill.

Not known where first on earth great Satan fell,
But soon he made all peopled lands his own.
From East to West he roamed— at last to dwell
And reign beyond God's Kingdom all alone.

Some lands there were that did not suit his health;
In fair domains and in a temperate clime
He raised a gorgeous palace with the wealth
Submissive vassals brought from time to time.

His palace grew into a Continent; *
Great countries were its stately audience halls;
Each had its land and ocean armament
To seize the outer world beyond its walls.

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*Modern Europe.

And then for sport a subtle plan he planned;
Eternal feuds must in his kingdom reign;
That pride and greed, to jealous fury fanned,
Must wade in guiltless blood for greedy gain.

"O Man! I'll make thee scorn thy Maker's might;
Irreverent and boastful of thy art,
By Wrong triumphant shalt thou vanquish Right;
Kill Conscience with the poison of thy heart.

"Proud of thy power mechanic, thou'lt destroy
All life on earth, ensconced in airy height;
Thy bombs and poison-gas shall blast the joy
Of valour, and the chivalry of fight.

"Thou'lt seek in Nature's name to sanctify
The guilty passions of impetuous youth.
Religion and its morals thou'lt defy;
Life's naked ugliness proclaim as Truth.

"Ay, morals and religion thou'lt abjure;
Quaint ugliness in art shall be thy theme:
Thy sculpture—but a grim caricature;
Thine architecture—a distempered dream!

"God gave thee Truth, I'll give thee Falsehood's lore;
God gave thee Virtue, I will teach thee Vice.
Thus will I lure thee on until before
God's altar stands my votive sacrifice!

"My sweetest morsel of revenge is this,
(O'er which with grateful heart I mutter grace)
To jibe at thy great past will be thy bliss;
Its noblest records will thy hands debase.

"Beauty thou'lt claim for all deformity,
Thy genius will pervert Creation's plan,
Until thy Modern Age shall sculpture thee—
My Super-puppet as its Superman!"

Man's World

ALL life within the mind of God was one;
The universe of being owned His law:
The ever-blazing fire that made a sun,
The sap unseen that lurked in leaf and straw.

Man came on earth, an atom Self-confined,
A slave to want in passion's drear domain,
Reviling generous Nature as unkind,
Rich with her gifts, yet seeking wealth in vain;

A slave to thought, a tyrant in his will,
An isolated waif adrift in space;
The bourne in sight, he wandered farther still
Past God's demesnes, unmindful of His grace.

"I'll raise a temple now to Discontent,
Bid Nature's forces yield to my demand;
I fain would rearrange the firmament,
Remap the earth with sacrilegious hand.

"God painted mankind yellow, black and white,
In idle sport—as would a wayward child.
I'll make all one to serve my own delight
Till with *my* wish God's will be reconciled."

He made it one according to his chart;
And now the wonders of his world behold!
A seething, monstrous, fleet-engirdled mart
Where armoured merchants barter blood for gold!

The World Today

BY godless greed and lust of power,
See nations driven to their doom!
A curse descends from skies that lour;
The trail of blood is lost in gloom.

A thousand years of glorious strife
To rise from serpent unto God,
Annulled by one fierce breath of life;
The earth-worm wriggles in the sod!

Whence, whither by wild passions driven,
Move they who scorn life's holiest creed;
Who take a golden hell for heaven,
And all that's needless for their need?

When light first dawned all darkness fled,
Wrong kneeled before the throne of Right.
Men's hearts with darkness overspread,
Now hail the demon-god of Might.

Their culture is but lacquer laid
On shapely jars that poison hold.
Their recreant faith, it must be paid
In human corpses strewn with gold.

The curse descends and black clouds lour;
Man's faith and honour wrapped in gloom,
By godless greed and lust of power
He's dragged—the culprit to his doom!

What I See

WHERE Faith lies dead and Honour is forsworn,
In friendship's guise embattled nations stand.
While Truth is crowned with ceremonious scorn,
The velvet glove conceals the iron hand.

God's beauteous earth becomes a vale of woe,
Where godless man doth wage a bitter strife,
And demon greed bids streams of blood to flow,
To deck with blood and gold the shrine of Life.

O for the indignant spirit's lightning flame
To purge the world of all its foul desire!
God's judgment unto nations to proclaim,
O for a voice of thunder, breath of fire!

Prophets! arise from immemorial graves
And let your spirits ride the trumpet's blast.
Once more the words that warn, the voice that saves;
Come, rule the present as ye ruled the past!

No more let brutal man God's peace destroy;
No more let Wrong exult in shameless might;
No more let nations with unholy joy
Tread into gilded dust immortal Right!

The Vision comes; I see the fatal day—
The work of Hate in mouldering ruins lies!
But mark! when years of travail pass away
A nobler world from out the wreck shall rise.

Now and After*

A Vision

WHAT scenes of horror in the air!
What blood-fumes in the sky!
What fiends cry "havoc and despair"
To Faith that bleeding lies!

With flames the spoiler's heart is fed;
There's blood upon his hands.
With blood yon ancient hills are red,
There's blood on yonder sands.

* *March* 1938.

The only poem composed on the Arabian soil while travelling from Jedda to Rabegh.

But patience, wretched heart of man!
Suppress thy bitter moan.
God's will defeats the spoiler's plan;
His ways are never known.

A thousand years of human pride
To Him are but a day.
His realms unseen what phantoms hide,
Of Empires in decay!

Then let them scorn the might of God,
By pride to madness driven.
Their dust and ashes shall be trod
By all the hosts of heaven!

To England, 1938*

ENGLAND! 'Twas not thy pomp of martial power
To which I gave the homage of my heart.
I saw thee in thy brightest, darkest hour
Guarding the great World's peace,—thy destined part.
The vision of thy glory in mine eyes
Was thy true self, a power ordained by fate
To strive for good as glory's noblest prize.
This taught me, while a boy, to hail thee great.

God made thee guardian of the rights of man,
God gave thee of His power to raise mankind
Trod in the dust. He fixed thee in His plan
As warder of the Trust to thee assigned.

Supreme on land and water didst thou reign;
But ne'er unmindful of thy God's command,
Who lent thee grace and taught thy heart to gain
More than the power of thy sceptred hand.

*Written in front of the Arabian coast near Kamran, 19th January.

The brute in man has risen from his lair
To make God's peaceful earth a hell of strife;
The poison of his breath is in the air;
His claws are closing round the heart of life!

Religion, law and morals cast aside,
He owns no grace while revelling in power;
The doom of nations masked in fiendish pride,
The world awaits her destiny's dark hour.

Two thousand years o'er Europe's head have flown
Since in the hour of triumph Cæsar fell.
The pagan gods have learned Christ's power to own;
Yet Christian Europe tolls the Christians' knell!

To stab the heart of peace they stab the heart
Of Jesus' self,—the Messenger of Peace.
Lo! from the bursting earth what legions start
With fire and blood, to bid His message cease!

Wouldst thou look on, and smile upon his foes?
Dost thou not know thy foemen from thy friends?
Are they not signals of unending woes,
Those greetings which their treacherous voice extends?

England awake! And be thyself once more—
The land of chivalry that Shakespeare owned,
When faith and honour gave thee righteous power,
And saw thee on the ocean-world enthroned.

Be true to self, and true to all around;
Keep Honour's torch alight, till in thy need
The Power that lives unseen in depths profound
Bring thee its succour, armoured in its creed! *

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* "The reference is to Islam ....Islam and the British Empire must be friends for the world's good."

To England just before the War—1939

BLOOD-RED the world! But "nought shall make us rue"
E'en thus again I hear the voice
Which once bade heroes' hearts rejoice,
"If England to herself remain but true."

When guileful friends all envious of thy might,
Approach thy shores and hover round,
By bonds of hidden hatred bound
To foul thy heart beneath thine armour bright,

Say, in those ancient halls where once was hung
The armour of thy knights of old,
Shall Honour now be bought and sold
And faithless hymns to lurking Treason sung?

Bold in thy bearing, proud and fair to view,
Once more with all thy glories crowned,
Confront the world and stand thy ground;
Defend the right and to thyself be true!

The War of 1939

The War of 1939

MAN'S crime is darkening earth and skies;
The world is wrapt in gloom;
From heaven to earth the mandate flies,
Of warring nations' doom!

What conquering arms e'er had the power
Its destined flight to stay?
Surcharged with blood, the passing hour
Brings on the fateful day.

While nations fight their destiny
Far mightier hands control.
So hath it been, so shall it be
While years and aeons roll.

Frail webs are mortals' plans before
The Eternal Planner's plan.
His will destroys but to restore
Faith to the heart of man.

There's suffering for the strong and brave;
There's suffering for the weak.
Who giveth life hath power to save;
He'll grant them what they seek.

Wrong shall not triumph in the end—
What though it triumph long?
Unseen the avenging hosts descend,
Whose breath will conquer wrong!

For those who pray and watch and wait,
Faith bids their sorrows cease;
God's will from 'neath the mask of Fate
Reveals His promised Peace.

Greece, 1941

THE patriot-heart of Greece once more
Has turned to shame the invader's pride,
Fired by the faith of those of yore
Who for their country lived and died:

The strong of arm, the great in soul
Who scorned the Persian's idle boast,
And calmly saw the ocean roll
His waves o'er Xerxes' scattered host.

They live and breathe, those mighty dead,
They live in every patriot's heart;
They bid him never bow the head
For peace ere life's last breath depart.

The soul of Greece, it never dies:
From fields of ancient fame to this,
From Ilion's blazing towers it flies,
From Marathon, from Salamis!

"Ye sons of Greece!" They hear the call
From earth below, from heaven on high.
"As heroes stand, as heroes fall;
As heroes live, as heroes die!

Foremost ye stood in war and peace,
Foremost in wisdom, glory, fame;
Be in your hearts the love of Greece
A fire that Rome has fanned to flame!

He who hath ever in His care
The true, the righteous and the strong,
'Tis he who bids you nobly dare,
And He will guard you from all wrong.

Whate'er it be His will to give—
Or be it loss or be it gain,
The glory of your deeds shall live,
The freshest wreath in Freedom's Fane."

The Turks, 1941

AY here we stand to guard our own,
Whatever dangers gather round.
We stand with faith in God alone;
We stand as Turks on Turkish ground.

Our Leader's* spirit is not dead;
It is a fire in every soul
E'en while we watch the skies o'erhead
And hear war's distant thunder roll.

An outlaw hunted for his life,
A leader lost, he stood alone;
Then in the midst of hopeless strife
Came succour from some Power unknown.

And then he turned to face the world,
Intrepid and undaunted still;
And soon his hand the vengeance hurled
At foemen, of his iron will.

He in his dying country's heart
His own heroic spirit poured;
Saw in her veins new life-blood start,
Put in her hand the victor's sword.

Thus made once more his nation great,
Inured to ills, in danger strong,
That they might win the best from Fate,
As friends to right and foes to wrong.

*Mustafa Kamal.

We hail him as our Leader yet;
He leads us on to do and dare.
Then let no Turkish heart forget
What he has 'trusted to its care.

For Right

BRITANNIA guards a shattered world,
Unflinching and undaunted still.
The flag of Right for right unfurled,
Be it a symbol of God's will!

Despite the horrors of the time
Let faith be strong in every heart.
We see the pride and power of Crime—
We'll see that power and pride depart.

Black ruin shrouds them in its pall,
Who sow the world with seeds of hate;
Accurst of God and man, they'll fall
Who seek by slaughter to be great.

'Tis but a breath, their vaunted might,
Against God's vengeance nought avails.
All power is His Who shieldeth Right;
Eternal Justice never fails.

The hoped-for end ordained on high
Is hastening tow'rd the promised day:
Not long will Europe prostrate lie
Beneath a robber-nation's sway!

Thoughts on "Empire Day," 1942

OUR lot is cast on evil days. The light
Of Heaven is eclipsed ; and far and near,
Cowed by the War Fiend's threats of hate and spite,
Are nations crouching at his feet in fear.

Now Satan's empire girdles many a land
Where mangled millions into flames are hurled,
And brutal Might proclaims with dripping brand
Her Order New that renovates the world!

'Tis Hell; but hope can look beyond to see
Something that yet may make our pangs less keen :
Some good that faith foretokens as to be—
Some after-taste of goodness that has been.

There was a world we owned with modest pride,
In which all nations had their share of good,
All men were honoured, none was e'er denied
His rightful place in human brotherhood.

It was not built of iron, blood and flame,
Upon the ruins of the human heart ;
No nations fostered hate by mutual blame,
Nor taught revenge to play the patriot's part.

In it of lasting peace did mankind dream ;
And kingdoms, states, and empires hoped to claim
Some grace reflected from the Power Supreme
And attributes connected with His name.

There lived in it a noble Queen who left
An Empire welded by goodwill in peace :
An honoured relic ne'er to be bereft
Of honour till all thought of honour cease

The mother's love that in her heart did burn
Was e'en like sunshine for the human race
And East and West did hail it, thus to learn
Forbearance, concord, amity and grace.

Victoria! a name that will resound
Through coming ages while men true remain.
Her gift was peace to all the world around—
From Britain's shores unto the farthest main.

Her name, emblazoned on her Empire's shield,
Be it a sacred symbol unto all
Who carve their way to glory in the field,
Or guard their nation in the Council Hall.

Her Empire stands, a living monument
Of her long reign with varied blessings crowned;
And in these days when all the earth is rent
With strife we turn to it as holy ground.

Let all men guard it—England's valiant sons,
And England's champions all with one accord.
Heaven's curse upon the caitiff's head who shuns
A trust so sacred, awed by Prussia's sword!

All honour to the dead who gave their all
And with their dearest life-blood sealed their will.
They stand as heroes—let none mourn their fall.
They are the vanguard of her Empire still.

They went not forth to seize with bloody hands
The spoils of ruthless strife; but meekly brave,
They won the martyr's crown in far off lands
For England's glory—which was theirs to save.

What terrors then had death? who could control
Their will to give? What gift could then suffice
Save that of life? Each death-enraptured soul
Stood up to God by glad self-sacrifice!

They live who thus for love of country died
For righteous freedom, not for wrongful gain.
Inheritors of England's nobler pride,
They fought and fell and did not die in vain.

Honour will hold their memory dear, who gave
Their very utmost in her hour of need,
Scorning the tyrant's boast, who would enslave
By guile and force all mankind in his greed.

Slow move the wheels of fate with stealthy pace;
Great hosts are marshalled in God's will unseen;
His strategy no mortal eye can trace
Until some shadows fall upon life's screen.

Ye stricken hearts! Ye widowed mothers bent
In joyless homes to lull your infants' cries!
Ye sisters, daughters! let no vain lament
Impugning heavenly justice upward rise!

None knows the mystery of fate but He
Whose will ordains and mortal life is tried
By right and wrong and truth's fidelity.
He's over all and He your faith will guide.

The image in your eyes, of husband, son
Or brother lives with you, restored by God
To tell of fameless triumph dearly won
O'er death and blazing flames and riven sod.

Oh! hail their spirits, for they hover near
To give new life to each remembered scene,
And in your hearts' deep silence bid you hear
His *healing voice who'll make your souls serene!

---

* Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving, 1945

SO Fate be now acquit of blame!
'Tis here—as was foredoomed to be—
The promised day of Victory,
Unfailing justice to proclaim.
We own Thy mercy, give Thee praise
For sheltering us through nights and days.

Who dare impugn the mystery
Whence good by chastening woes was wrought
And faith by suffering was taught
Thy grace—the crowning Victory?
We own Thy mercy, give Thee praise
Through all our lengthening nights and days,

Yea, Thine alone the Victory
Of rightful over wrongful might
When wrong distraught by fiendish spite,
Befouled a people's* history.
We own Thy mercy, give Thee praise
For restful nights and peaceful days.

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* Germany.

Islamic and Arabian Poems

Recantation

Ex Oriente Lux!

FROM fading dreams of Greece and Rome,
Art's splendour, pomp of power
My fancy turned to find a home
Where stood the Muses' bower.

I heard afar loud anthems swell
From out the heart of Time;
I heard in meads of Asphodel
Olympian strains sublime.

There manlike gods and godlike men
In dreamy silence trod
Elysian fields with heedless ken,
Nor owned the grace of God.

Full soon I tired of fabled truth
That walked in faith's disguise,
And from all myths that charmed my youth
I turned with sober eyes

Where pensive sat the Athenian sage*
With eager heart to view
Unravelled upon wisdom's page
The nature of The True.

With him I bowed where glowing Faith
Had raised a holier shrine;
With him I learned to conquer death
By aid of grace divine!

*Socrates.

Forsaken lie the Muses' bowers,
Their harps with broken strings,
No longer rise in fountain-showers
The Heliconian springs.

In mist Olympus hides his head,
No longer held divine;
The Mounts of Mercy, Light and Grace
With holier splendour shine.

A purer heaven before me lies
Than Hellas' sages knew;
A grander earth and grander skies
Than where Rome's eagles flew.

A hermit in my lonely cell,
A knight before my tower—
As such it is my lot to dwell
In presence of His power

Who, self-revealing, sent the Word,
(And thus all truths revealed)
In solemn thunder-music heard
By Prophets in the field.

The Call

I HEAR a call from regions far and near,
From out the past and present, loud and long;
It fires my dormant soul, it smites mine ear,
Thrills every vein and moves my heart to song.

And then new modes to tell my soaring dreams
Of Islam's pride of place, 'tis mine to use;
And mine the pride to wed Arabian themes
To lyric measures for the British Muse.

Though frail the hand that trembles on the strings ;
Though weak the voice that fain would soar on high ;
Still, still to me its faintest murmur brings
High hopes that rise to claim all earth and sky !

Invocation to Faith

O LIGHT unseen ! Lead thou us onward still,
And guide the purer passions of the soul
That man's disparted life again made whole
May claim its birthright of divine good-will.
Lead us through strife to power to fulfil
Life's purpose wrapt in nature ; shape, control
Each growing impulse in us to enrol
The chastened with the blest redeemed from ill.

With us in life, so be thou ours in death.
Unite the past and present—there and here.
O link our earth and heaven with one beam
That radiates from the Source ! Let each drawn breath
Bring light to make our darkness disappear,
And mirror forth the Real in our dream.

Islam

ALL Nature breathes the spirit of Islam—
A glad submission to the Maker's will.
Her heart is pulsing but her face is calm ;
Her mighty forces work in silence still.

How calm with all his fire the blazing sun !
How calm the skies when morning follows night
How smoothly in their destined orbits run,
How silently, a million orbs of light !

By law supreme a perfect order reigns
On earth below and in the heavens on high;
Above, below, along life's viewless planes
Unheard, unseen what spirit-couriers fly!

No stir, and no confusion, and no sound,
Yet Nature moves and life is never still.
Nature reveals God's symbols all around,
And bows submissive to His righteous will.

The selfsame law is for the life of man,
That world wherein his reason stands supreme.
Faith shows to reason in his Maker's plan
The substance, not the shadow of his dream.

The Empire of Islam

WHEN sword and sceptre, crown and throne were cast
A shapeless wreck round Time's devouring shore,
God's will could yet remould the shattered past,
Rebuild Life's throne though empires were no more.
Their conquering might sunk in oblivion,
Their ancient glories sepulchred in loam,
Egypt, Assyria, Media, Babylon
Were names, and fading memories Greece and Rome.

Man's will triumphant bade the future rise
From out the past, and hope and faith, reborn,
Strove for the empire of the earth and skies,
And changed the night of ages into morn!
A Prophet's will, supreme o'er space and time,
Did gain unbounded realms by faith sublime,

The Blessed Messenger

UNKNOWN to self, unconscious of his power,
He gazed aloft where Faith's bright vision lay.
Beyond this earth, beyond the light of day
He gazed afar as from a lofty tower.
Morn, noon and night, in brightest, darkest hour
He saw in all things near and far away—
In birth, in death, in growth and in decay,
From man to lowliest worm, from star to flower
The Maker's power revealed. Each wish, each thought
Came as a breath from Him, no longer far:
A breath of light, a light from breath divine,
Charged with the Word. It was a beacon fraught
With hope for all, a never-setting star
Whose unextinguished beams through ages shine.

* * *

Still gazing upward, waiting—such the part
To test his worth the Power ordained on high,
No torments forced the tribute of a sigh,
No weak repining owned the secret smart.
No hero's breast was pierced with such a dart,
And none so meekly brave, did so defy,
With dauntless bosom and with steadfast eye,
And patient faith, the anguish of the heart.
Faith triumphed over all, and travails o'er,
The world with all its gifts lay at his feet;
But on another world was fixed his gaze,
Where good alone shall live for evermore,
And where the dead shall rise their Lord to greet
Peace in their hearts, and on their lips His praise.

* * *

"The veil is lifted; let all mankind see
In Heaven and Hell, the mystery of Doom;
In Life, the spirit's splendour and its gloom;
In Death, the mask of Immortality."
Such was the mandate and it bade him be
The messenger of Truth and Light to illume

The heart of man where evil still finds room
And self-deluding sin takes sanctuary.
Soldier and saint, unvanquished though alone,
High-souled, pure-hearted Leader of mankind !
Light-bearer, guide entrusted and ordained !
O lead us on from height to height unknown
Till God as ever-living Truth we find
And Peace be ours when this last height is gained !

The Great Khaliphs of Islam

IMMORTAL Faith, immortal Love
Raised high on rapture's wings
Their souls that learned to soar above
The pomp and pride of kings

Love claimed, by right of heavenly birth,
Its heritage divine ;
Faith saw from far, though chained on earth,
The heavenly glories shine.

Mortals, and in Life's prison pent,
They nobly dared to rise
Into a vaster firmament
Of grander earths and skies,

And ranging God's creation, free
From self's ignoble strife,
They gathered Truth's infinity
Into the core of Life.

Their prayers that winged the passing hour,
Eternal life did claim ;
Such faith was theirs, it shared the power
That feeds the suns with flame.

'Twas theirs the hallowed path to find,
That once their Leader trod,
And in the guidance of mankind,
The way that leads to God.

The Miracles of Islam

A FAITH in one lone bosom stirred,
A voice by one lone ear was heard
And all Creation and its mystery
Lay like an open book lit by one word
'Read '[1] and the heart became an eye to see
God's self in His Creation. All was light—
The Unity of God, His mercy and His might.

A savage race, a savage clime;
He but a man who, past his prime,
Unread before, was made that Word to read,
The Word that burned into the heart of Time
The simplest, purest, and the noblest creed.
That living Word, a miracle, went forth
To conquer realms and hearts to East and West and North!

By it the Arab righteous made,
Brave, and of none but God afraid,
Child of the desert, broke proud Persia's[2] might
And quenched her sun; her pomp and glory's shade
Was like a phantom lost in endless night.
A miracle; for soon salvation came
And Persia stood once more upon the roll of fame.

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1. The first Sura of the Quran in which the Prophet was commanded to read.

2. Battle of Cadesia won by Sa'd bin Waqqas, A.D. 632, within a year of the Prophet's death.

The dazzled votaries of the Sun
Who lost their creed and kingdom, won
New light from Truth, and learned to bow before
The Unseen, Increate, Eternal, One ;—
His goodness, might and mercy to adore,
Whose light unchanged their changeful beams hath given
Unto the sun, and moon, and all the stars of heaven

And Syria[1] too, the Eastern home
Of the decaying pomp of Rome,
Beheld a miracle—the lightning glance
Of Arab swords—and like a tottering dome
Fell at the touch of Bedouin sword and lance.
Nor Rome's dread name nor all her deeds' renown
Could stem the conquering tide that rushed from town to town.

Later, the Sphinx[2] was forced to read
The riddle of the new-old creed
Which Moses thundered once in Pharaoh's ear ;
And Memphis hailed the miracle at her need
To rise from darkness into daylight clear ;
And Alexander's city[3] owned the sway
Of Yethreb[4] in whose heart a mighty empire lay !

Then ruined Carthage,[5] great in fame,
Contemner of the Roman name,
Warder of Afric's burning heart restored
To Islam's keeping when its heroes came,
Her faded laurels and her broken sword.
But onward, westward did the conquerors ride,
Where tow'rd the setting sun the Atlantic flings his tide.

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1. Syria conquered by Khalid, the Sword of God, and Abu Obeidah, A.D. 632-37.
2. Invasion of Egypt by Amrou, A.D. 638, and conquest of Memphis.
3. Alexandria.
4. The old name of Medina from which the conquering generals were sent.
5. Invasion of Africa by the Arabs, A.D. 647, and Progress Westward, 665-689. Conquest of Carthage by Hassan, A.D. 692.

A halt—but soon yon Ocean-stream
Beholds the Moorish weapons gleam.
Once more a miracle! for Heaven decrees
The swift fulfilment of Don Roderick's dream[1]
Soon from his mountain's brow[2] the Victor[3] sees
The pomp of Gothic arms on Xeres' plain—
" All glory unto God! He gives us Spain! "

The News from Persia

THE prophet's town engirt with sands
That touch the far horizon's rim;
The home and hallowed shrine it stands
Of glory that will ne'er be dim.

A stronghold of triumphant faith,
This sovran city of Islam!
We hear its heart-beats, feel its breath
Through days of storm and years of calm.

What visions o'er its ruins glide!
They bid past greatness breathe again
As onward sweeps Faith's mighty tide
From Persia's leaguered fields to Spain.

Onward it rolls, a whirlwind force
Above the grandeur of the Past,
And ancient realms along its course
As waifs of drifted wreck are cast.

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1. Don Roderick, the last Gothic king, is said to have seen in a vision the conquest of his kingdom by the Moors.

2. Gibraltar (Jebel-et-Tariq).

3. Tariq the Conqueror of Spain defeated an army of 90-100 thousand Spaniards near Xeres on July 19-26 in the year A.D. 711.

Medina, City of our soul!
Unseen thy deathless glories live.
No more dost thou a world control,
Yet hast thou more than worlds can give.

Oh! richer far than gold and gems
Thy Prophet's pride of poverty;
Above all thrones and diadems
Thy poor man's world-wide sovereignty!

By him inspired, thy desert horde
Soon haughty Persia's power defied;
Nor gems nor arms could save her lord[1]
Who feebly perished in his pride.

And he[2] who proud of sceptred sway,
The Prophet's greetings turned to scorn—
A curse upon his empire lay;
Its annals were a parcmhent torn!

Where is his glory—or of Greece?
Where is his grandeur—or of Rome?
The spirit's conquests never cease,
God's glory is the spirit's home.

Behold the Khaliph where he stands
Before the Prophet's mosque! His gaze
Is fixed afar o'er trackless sands....
Where Persia glistens through the haze.

He marks Yezdgurd, sole scion left,
Sole relic of uncounted kings;
He sees an ancient kingdom cleft—
Adown the years its echo rings!

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1. Yezdgurd.

2. Khusro.

'Tis day, 'tis night ;'tis night ;'tis day—
From one to three—Cadesia falls ![1]
The Khaliph rushes forth—away
And far beyond Medina's walls. . . .

On, on—and tow'rd the unseen land
Of Persia ! In his blinding haste
He little heeds the sinking sand,
He little heeds the dreary waste.

But lo ! A courier camel-borne
Looms into sight. . . . The Khaliph views,
With heart aglow in limbs unworn,
That vision and its course pursues.

At length Medina town they gain,
Where wait the elders for their Chief.
The mounted courier and his train
Approach and bring their hearts relief.

The courier while he forward rode,
He had not paused to mark the face
Of him who by his camel strode—
That stalwart man with giant pace.

But in the town full soon he found
Who'd squired him of his own accord :
The mighty ruler far renowned—
The Muslims' Chief, Medina's lord !

Anon—still dazed by shame and fear,
Forward he comes t' avow the blame ;
The Khaliph[2] smiles as he draws near
And puts to flight his fear and shame.

1. The battle of Cadesia, A.D. 636.

2. Omar the Great.

" Friend, thou wast speeding on thy way
To tell thy news of Persia won,
And thy hot haste brooked no delay.
So by thy side 'twas mine to run."

After the Conquest of Persia

LOUD throbs Medina's heart with prayer and praise ;
Her conquering arms from Persia's fields return ;
All eyes upon the heroes fix their gaze,
While anxious hearts for missing faces yearn.

Outside the Prophet's mosque the elders stand
Around their Chief to welcome and to greet
The noble leaders and the valiant band
Who come to lay their trophies at his feet.

And he, the Khalif marks the joyous stir
Of grateful hearts rejoicing in their gain—
He, throneless king and pompless conqueror
Of Syria's lands and Persia's wide domain !

A tall stern figure, somewhat past his prime,
An iron will within an iron frame,
Ordained to stamp Faith's edicts upon time :
Omar,* a man of might, a mighty name.

His were the words " Sa'd Waqqas ! Be it thine
O'er godless realms God's levin-bolt to fling,
To purge with purer flame the Magian's shrine,
To tame the high-born pride of Persia's King."

* Omar the Great, the 2nd Khalifa.

Sa'd heard—and went and conquered; quenched the star
That long had shone upon the Persian race.
Soldier of fate, whose victory near and far
Did spread like light the beams of dawning grace.

And now behold there lie upon the ground
Trophies of nameless price from Persia won:
Bright jewels all in heaps, before, around,
That once adorned the votaries of the Sun.

The Khalif looks, then turns away his eyes;
Another vision haunting memory brings:
He hears the voice that taught him to despise
The glittering gauds that grace the pomp of kings.

What thoughts are his upon this glorious day—
More glorious than an Alexander's dream!
Deep thoughts, high thoughts, and sad thoughts that dismay
The soul that takes life's gifts for what they seem.

"Lo! Persia's kingdom lies a crumpled scroll,
As he foretold who sleeps in yonder grave.
God's peace and blessings on the Prophet's soul!
Glory is God's, not mine, His humble slave.

All, all upon this earth shall pass away:
Kingdoms and kings, wealth, power, glory, fame—
The weak heart's snare, the playthings of a day;
The weak soul's lure, the echoes of a name.

Thy power abides, for Thine the hand alone
Which holds the kingdom of the earth and skies.
Lord of all worlds! Creation is Thy throne,
And all Eternity below Thee lies."

Such are his thoughts ; he turns the crowd to scan.
" Say, who hath seen the Persian on his throne,
Decked in his jewelled trappings ? Dress yon man
E'en like the King, that to us may be known

Vain Yezdgurd's form—poor phantom of a king !"
An Arab soldier wears the diadem
The monarch wore, his collar and his ring,
His shoes of gold, his robe with jewelled hem.

" For these he lost his life......when he had lost
His kingdom........and his warriors, through his pride.
He had the choice and chose at mortal cost
That which hath fled, not that which shall abide !"

The Entry into Jerusalem

" JERUSALEM in Arab hands !"
The Patriarch,* bowed down with woe,
Beholds the conquering Arab bands
And mourns the hapless overthrow
Of elder faiths which reverence claim
By age and sanctity and fame.

To him the Arab is a foe
Unpitying, uncouth and wild,
With heart that ne'er did mercy know,
And hands with Christian blood defiled.
" For peace to parley with this race—
Ignominy and dire disgrace ! "

Awhile he ponders, in his mind
By hope inspired a plan is planned ;
" The terms of peace shall here be signed,
And sealed too by the Amir's hand ! "
A mounted courier soon doth bear
The Pontiff's greetings to the Amir.

* Sophronius.

The Amir hears the missive read,
Then is the Elders' counsel sought ;
Awhile in silence bends his head,
His gathered brows o'ercast with thought :
" 'Tis His command ; He wills it so,
And Omar as his slave must go."

A Ruler he, a Conqueror
As humble pilgrim forth must ride
With but a single servitor,
A trusty, comrade by his side ;
No armèd warriors' marshalled band,
Nor horse nor foot to stir the sand.

The toilsome journey thus begun,
He must pursue it to the end ;
Nor scorching sand nor blazing sun—
Nay, nought that iron will can bend.
With faith undaunted forth he goes—
Be it to friends, be it to foes.

Vicegerent of the Prophet he,
The conqueror of many a land,
Yet such his heart's humility,
The servitor by his command
One stage must on the camel ride
While he must plod on foot beside.

Ay, thus along the desert bare
They take their turns to walk and ride ;
As equals share the same coarse fare,
As equals sitting side by side.
The Muslim heart well understood
The noble creed of brotherhood.

Full many a long league left behind,
They gain at last the desert's hem
Whence not afar, there lay enshrined
The relics of Jerusalem :
Proud steeple, belfry, dome and tower
'Mid symbols of Caesarian power.

Now comes before the guarded gates
A camel-courier travel-worn ;
'Tis he whom either host awaits
From ere the early chimes of morn.
And eke a stalwart form is seen
That moves beside that camel lean.

Ah ! haply from Medina's lord
He comes and welcome tidings brings—
From him who wields the conqueror's sword
And whom men deem a king of kings.
What eager hearts around him throng,
That for his coming waited long !

But that tall man who draweth near
Doth cast a spell on Arab eyes,
And priest and prelate turn to hear
A startling murmur of surprise ;
" 'Tis he, th' Amir !" the whisper goes
As Arab chieftains round him close.

'Tis he, before their eyes he stands—
What hopes and fears their bosoms stir !
The conqueror of many lands,
This camel-man—their conqueror !
A man majestic, meek, not proud,
Before whom heads and hearts are bowed.

And priest and warrior haste to greet
The Chief who o'er the East held sway—
The traveller at whose dusty feet

The fate of their Blest City lay.
" Exalted, mighty, brave and just,
Be 't thine to guard our Sacred Trust ! "

They step into the lofty aisle
Long wont to echo hymns of praise ;
With kindly tones and gracious smile
The Muslim meets the Christians' gaze,
And all their fair demands agreed,
Grants safeguards for their Church and creed.

And at the hour of Muslim pray'r
The Khalif to the Pontiff said
He'd fain beyond the Church* repair
Before his God to bow his head.
The priest in friendly wise did say
He might within the precincts pray.

The terrace and the outer court
Full soon the Khalif left behind,
And then a place of less resort
Afar his heedful eye did find.
Pray'rs said, back to the priests he went,
Whose eyes were on his deeds intent.

" Nay, friends," said he, " deem it not odd
If 'neath your dome I did not pray ;
Your God and ours is mankind's God ;
All holy fanes are His alway,
But yours the Muslims would have made
A mosque if I had therein prayed.

" 'Tis yours and even so 'tis writ
Here in this script ; behold ! my seal
As pledge of faith I set to it,

* Church of Holy Sepulchre.

That safe within it ye shall kneel."
'Twas thus, and thus did Islam gain
O'er human hearts a wide domain.

The Arab Chaunt

ARABIA lay entombed in night;
A beam from Heaven revealed
Islam, a sword of living light,
Islam, the spirit's shield.

A prophet in our midst arose,
Whose voice to God appealed
" Allah ! Thy grace high gifts bestows,
Let Islam be our shield !"

And then beyond the desert sand
The wide world was our field,
The sword of Faith was in our hand,
With Islam for our shield.

And when we marched across the world,
Our power of faith to wield,
Islam the flag of Peace unfurled
High o'er its blazoned shield.

We dared—and rose to heights unknown
Of power which ne'er would yield
Save to the will of God alone,
While Islam was our shield.

We fought for Faith in love, not hate,
And Faith this vision revealed :
Mankind—one nation good and great,
With Islam for its shield,

Our pact of love and Brotherhood
With faith and honour sealed,
True Champions of Right we stood,
With Islam for our shield.

Years rolled, Time saw our glories fade;
We sank 'neath grace repealed.
Our power with righteous will decayed
Though Islam was our shield.

We sank, and sank—to rise again
Till Fate to us shall yield
The skill to wipe each rusty stain
Off Islam's dented shield!

To God alone all glory, power—
To Him alone we've kneeled.
'Tis ours to scorn misfortune's hour
While Islam is our shield.

Proud of our past, in freedom strong,
No power shall see us yield.
We fear no proud oppressor's wrong
While Islam is our shield.

The Quran and the Sword

UNTRUTHS untruthful minds will haunt
And prompt the dubious word,
Urge malice to the envious taunt
"The Quran and the sword!"
To facts which history reveals
Their folly gives the lie.
But knowledge treads on error's heels,
Truth will untruth defy.

Such truth the Arab's heart did stir—
'Twas in his Book of Faith.
He made his sword faith's arbiter
And bade it challenge death.
Still in his tent or thatched home
The two beside him lay,
They were, when he went forth to roam,
Companions of his way.

The Book was held, the sword was swayed
By hands that brought relief:
By God's command that Book forbade
Compulsion* in belief.
The Book taught faith and won the heart,
The sword but kingdoms won.
Faith's glory never shall depart;
Power faded 'neath the Sun.

Islam, when in its glorious youth,
Was generous, true and bold;
Went forth to win the world to Truth;
Craved neither land nor gold.
Held out a loving brother's hand
To those who hailed the Light;
Shook in the sheath the conqueror's brand
Tow'rd those who came to fight.

It proffered those who would obey
And fain would tribute yield,
The blessings of its peaceful sway,
The shelter of its shield.
Thus, soon the marvel came to be—
Unheard, unknown before—
Arabia marched o'er land and sea,
Islam from shore to shore!

* "No compulsion in religion."—The Quran.

Romanus,* an Imperial Knight,
Lord of an ancient town,
Custodian of Rome's martial might,
And of her dread renown,
Had borne the spirit's secret woes
Rome's faith could not allay,
Till from dim shades of doubt he rose
To greet the shining day.

Oft had he mused while rumour spoke
Of Arabs' deeds of grace—
Those warriors wild who never broke
Faith with an alien race;
How of their faith was justice born
To crown their deeds of arms;
How faith brought mercy to adorn
Their troth midst war's alarms.

An envoy to the Arab Chief
The Roman's greetings bore:
" My heart avows the true belief—
Thy friendship I implore."
When peace brought hope to many a land
That Islam's coming hailed,
The sword lay idle in the hand
Of faith that never failed!

'Twas tolerance of every creed,
'Twas faith tow'rd friend and foe,
'Twas righteousness in will and deed
That Islam came to show.
And thus the marvel came to be—
Unheard, unknown before—
Arabia marched o'er land and sea,
Islam from shore to shore!

* Gibbon.

The First Solidiers of Islam*

WHEN Islam came down as a light from the sky,
Our faith and our valour their bright wings unfurled;
When it came as a breath from our Maker on high,
Then we rose from our desert to challenge the world

'Twas the breath of our being, the blood of our heart
And our wealth and our glory in life and in death,
For our promised reward was the conquerors' part
Whose valour was truth, and whose power was faith.

But we carried the sword 'neath the banner of Peace
And we hailed as our brethren the whole of mankind,
And we called them to faith that all discord might cease,
And we taught them submission life's graces to find.

---

* This poem has been translated into Persian by the author.—*Ed.*

At the Haj

KINGDOMS and Empires may decline,
Of pomp and power and splendour reft ;
Here is no change—the spark divine
Still in these hills and sands is left.

May it not leap once more to flame
And dart its beams across the world,
Lead Right once more her rule to claim,
See Wrong once more to ruin hurled ?

Long years through varied scenes have rolled,
But left untouched the desert wild,
And left untamed the Arab bold,
The desert's lord, the desert's child.

The might of Arab heart and hand
Still breathes, of outward glory shorn,
The faith that glows in burning sand,
The freedom of the desert born.

The Arab scorns our world of pride ;
He built his—and might build again.
But he must seek what shall abide ;
And what he lost may be his gain !

Untaught, unused to smile on wrong,
Fearless of loss, entrenched in faith—
This made him, and will make him strong,
Unconquered, free—in life, in death.

Strong, patient, to God's will resigned,
His faith will direst ills outlast;
For deep within his soul he'll find
The living message of the Past.

Faith moves him on to find the way
By God ordained, by Prophets found,
And hope renews the promised day
Whene'er he treads this holy ground.*

A Quranic Hymn

THOU Lord of all Creation!
Thou King of all mankind!
Thou God of all the nations!
In Thee we refuge find
From those who follow Satan
And aid him in his plan
When he doth whisper evil
Into the heart of man.

Lord of the light that dawneth
From out the shades of Night!
O lead us out of darkness
And guide us to Thy light!
When succour from Thee cometh
Right triumphs over Wrong;
And then 'tis theirs the victory,
Whose faith is pure and strong.

*This poem has been translated into Persian by the author—Ed.

A Prayer in the Prophet's Shrine, Medina

O MIGHTY spirit, pure and true,
Ordained to bear His trust,
That tried by sorest trials grew
More faithful and more just!
While here I bow in silent prayer
I feel thee hovering nigh.
" Let not the sinner's heart despair,"
A voice calls from on high,

" By grace alone will Heaven relieve
The sinner of his woe."
But let not this my heart deceive;
For thou dost bid me know
How vain the sanctimonious mood
When prompted by some fear,
How vain mere words of gratitude,
Repentance insincere!

The prayer that from thy soul did rise
On wings of ecstasy,
Could pierce the veil of earth and skies
And bring God near to thee.
Through silent vigils of the night
His voice was in thine ear:
" 'Tis thine to lead mankind aright
Toward light from darkness drear."

Prophet of god—an outlaw driven
Away from hearth and home!
Thy feet on earth, thy head in heaven,
It was for thee to roam
An exile till by His command
A happier home didst gain
Where Islam ruled the subject land
From proud Medina's plain.

Yea, thus amidst the toils of life,
Its horrors and its woes
Thy soul won peace through patient strife
And stood serene where glows
The light unseen around the Throne,
To see what few had seen.
Thou but a man, yet thine alone
The glory that hath been.

A mortal thou, yet born to bear
The weight of earth and heaven ;
A Prophet thou, yet to thy share
A Sovereign's power was given.
Prophet and king! Life's humblest task
Ne'er did thy hands refuse ;
And ne'er didst thou God's bounty ask
But for thy people's use.

In sworn allegiance at thy feet
When all Arabia lay,
When Chiefs and Envoys came to greet
Islam's new-risen day,
They saw thy glory and thy might
(Unlike the pomp of kings)
In self-denying sense of Right
That from God's guidance springs.

Saw thee in clouted garb, a man
In God's own grace arrayed,
A humble guardian of the plan
Thy Master's hand had laid
To quell all darkness with His light
Through regions near and far,
To make thee shine through Error's night
A new resplendent Star.

I feel God's presence in this shrine
Fashioned by thine own hands.
I see the fresh-hewn palm-trunks shine
Where now this alcove stands.
These arches' painted pageantry
From me shall ne'er conceal
Faith's unembellished majesty
Thy palm-trees did reveal!

In rapt devotion on this floor
My suppliant form I lay;
Raise me to trace for evermore
Thy footmarks on Life's way!
O make my soul, reborn, to cast
The dregs of sin aside,
My future brighter than my past,
With thee my light, my Guide!

For faith, with heart's blood in my tears,
For faith to thee I cry;
That faith to which God's grace appears
On earth, in air and sky.
What shades my soul's dark caverns fill,
O, let them turn to light!
Let rising hopes my being thrill
With rising faith's delight!

Quba

A LONELY ruined hamlet
That wears a crown of palm;
Lapped in the peace of ages,
It breathes a holy calm

E'er since Arabia's Prophet
First stepped upon its sod
And with his own hand's labour
Did raise a shrine to God.

An exile from his homeland,
He smiled on fortune's frown,
While with a heart undaunted
He sought Medina town.

Here on his way he halted,
Obedient to a sign
That came from Heaven—an omen
Of promised aid divine.

By some mysterious instinct
His camel here knelt down:
A presage to the Seer
Of undisclosed renown.

He hailed the blessèd omen,
And with a trustful heart
He stooped—Arabia's Prophet*
To play a mason's part!

The Quba Mosque*

SUBLIME in simple majesty,
White-walled and archèd high;
Its brow, from vain adornment free,
Raised calmly to the sky;
It watches o'er a sandy plain
And palm-groves spread around,
Blest by the sign that did ordain
Its precincts holy ground.

As in the glades of Paradise
Where mystic scenes unroll,
Beauties unseen of mortal eyes
Are flashed upon the soul,

*The first stones of this Mosque were laid by the Prophet's own hands.

E'en so upon its plain white walls
A faint reflected glow
Of light from happier regions falls
Than any earth can show.

A light not seen, but dimly felt
As token of God's grace
Surrounds the spot where once he knelt,
The Saviour of his race.
The silence throbs with bliss, the air
By some soft touch is swayed,
And peace that quells all earthly care
Is to each heart conveyed.

Whene'er upon thine hallowed floor
Quba! 'twas mine to kneel,
A bliss serene unfelt before,
Came to my heart to heal.
Quba! thy name is ever blest,
Medina's threshold thou!
God's peace abideth in thy breast,
His light upon thy brow.

The Kiblatain Mosque

(Near Medina)

A HUMBLE place of worship—
A 'House of God'—it stands
To mark the flight of ages
O'er crumbling stones and sands.
Unto the weary pilgrim
A shelter in distress,
And unto faith a stronghold
In this grim wilderness.

A calm blue sky above it,
A sandy plain around,
Black stones in shapeless masses
Lie strewn upon the ground.
God's grandeur little needeth
The ministry of art;
'Mid desolate scenes He claimeth
The homage of man's heart.

This shrine hath stood for ages,
A desert monument
Of one great deed accomplished—
A heaven-ordained event;
And years more than a thousand
Have o'er its ruins rolled
Since first it caught the tidings
Which on this spot was told:

How that unto the Prophet
Had come the voice divine:
"Turn thou unto the Kaaba—*
The Arabs' ancient shrine;
Ay, turn unto it ever
From whereso'er ye be.
That which thy heart did long for
We grant that unto thee."

So they who'd faced Jerusalem,
As was their wont to do—
Stood once again to worship,
And prayed their prayers anew.
'Twas on this wise; and truly
High honour doth it claim,
"The Musjid of Twin-Kibla"
All-hallowed be its name!

* Quran.

Medina

MEDINA is the thronéd seat
Of Faith and Prophet's power.
Medina stands in Muslim hearts
As Islam's guarded tower.

Medina through the world raised high
The Glory of Islam :
Medina through the world spread wide
The Justice of Islam.

From East to West the boon behold,
Of its benignant reign !
A nobler form of sovereign power
A newer world did gain.

The heart of China, and of Ind
And Persia's wide domain,
Of Egypt, Turkey and Iraq,
And of remoter Spain—

Such was Medina, and its call
From East to West rang wide ;
And to the world the glad news came
Of grace from every side.

The Ruler of the faithful band,
A poor man, his renown
In pride of poverty outshone
The glory of a crown.

What prowess sanctified by faith
He to his band conveyed,
Till to his will Time's cycle bowed,
All Earth his word obeyed!

Such honoured might, such hallowed power
Nor Greece nor Rome did know
As from the first the Grace of God
On Muslims did bestow.

While hands were strong and hearts did hold
Undimmed the Quran's light,
Did Islam to the world send forth
The mandate of its might.

Call of Medina*

FROM Medina's dust arising,
Faith sent forth a beacon-blaze,
New worlds as his own revealing
To the Muslim's eager gaze.

Earthed in fire-shrines, though in cinders
Lay the fire that wont to be,
On th' horizon rose a planet—
Persia's happier destiny.

From Iraq's and Syria's vision
Superstition's veil was raised;
Earth then owned a new-found grandeur,
Skies with brighter glory blazed.

Power supreme was God Almighty's—
He the Lord of earth and sky,
He the Master as Creator
Of men, brutes and genii.

Prophets were His servants—never
Did they right to rule demand;
Messengers—their duty, guidance
In obedience to command.

---

* This poem was originally written in Urdu.—*Ed.*

What of Khusroes, what of Caesars?
All were doomed to disappear.
Such was Fate's design and mandate
Given to the rolling year.

He who stood above all monarchs—
Monarchs of imperial sway—
In blest poverty rejoicing
(Humble pride, and no dismay)—

Never craved his heart adornment,
Never longed for gem nor gold—
Heart that was of Truth the mirror,
Heart that did Heaven's light infold.

Morn till eve in arduous labours,
All the night in worship spent,
Every fast to God a tribute
Of a grateful heart's content.

Warder of the rising faith and
Guardian of the faithful band;
Righteous, striving; dauntless, suffering;
Man of action, shield in hand.

Such the pious strength and valour
That subdued the foemen's race;
And his conquest and its message—
Only amnesty, and grace!

Of this crownless king the Khalifs*
Ruling o'er a wide domain,
Ruled o'ver Syria, ruled o'er Persia,
Egypt, Africa and Spain.

Not from wealth, and not from grandeur,
But from might of faith alone
Islam's right to rule the world—and
Such a right did Islam own.

* Successors.

Islam's centre is Medina,
Hallowed seat of sovereign power;
Treasure-house of glorious memories
And of Faith's celestial dower.

Faith's resplendent rays are vibrant
Still upon its holy ground,
Though from hidden ills some shadows,
Inauspicious, fall around.

What though power with wealth has faded
Will men let their courage die?
Is there no Muslim who in misery
Still can hold his head full high?

Muslims' sloth was Muslims' downfall,
Oh! the glory that has been
Fills with awe and breathes a sadness
O'er this City's desolate scene.

Muslim hearts! Be not despondent;
Ye shall see its glories rise.
Ruins yet shall wear the semblance
Of the bowers of Paradise.

Here, though hid in dust and squalour,
Light from God may still be won;
Every mote and atom floating
Here reflects the shining sun!

Rise, O rise from lethal slumber,
On Medina fix your eyes!
Heart and home of Muslim's being,
Here the hope of Muslims lies.

Never will our hearts as Muslims,
Never of God's aid despair,
Heart of faith is God's own stronghold;
What lack we when He is there?

Muslims of the world! Your duty—
Whether rich or humble you—
Is to aid Medina's people,
If your vows of Faith be true.

Faith is neither whim nor fancy ;
Nor of empty words a store.
Work like him, the mighty Worker
Who did build our world before.

By mere words and vain professions
Can ye ever hope to claim
Status as the Prophet's People,
Win the Muslim's honoured name ?

Yield your heart, your wealth, your service—
Yield them all to serve His cause.
Win the guerdon of well-doing :
God's approval, men's applause !

Grant O God!* to every Muslim,
Grant the will to righteous deed,
Muslims by their deeds confirming
Their profession of the creed.

At Nawab Wali-ud-Dowlah's Grave, Medina

THE light of day is fading,
The evening air is still ;
A holy calm is brooding
O'er city, plain and hill—

*This impassioned appeal was an almost spontaneous utterance. The Urdu version was spoken in the course of a conversation after his return from the first Haj.—*Ed.*

The City of Medina,
The Prophet's second home,
The lodestar of the faithful,
The City of the Dome.

Within its ancient graveyard
I stand beside the grave
Of one whose soul found refuge
Among the good and brave ;

Found shelter from the sorrows
That gnaw the secret heart
When pleasure's reign is over
And mocking hopes depart.

O dear to me in boyhood,
At close of life more dear!
Shall love to thee here offer
The tribute of a tear ?

Here, where the Prophet's daughter
More honoured than a queen,
And these her holy kindred
Are presences unseen ?

There is a voice of welcome,
That voice forbids regret ;
Says 'Only this remember,
And all the rest forget.'

Yes, all must be forgotten
That Time and Fortune gave ;
Vain honours, gilded follies
That enter not the grave.

Thy villas and thy mansions,
No longer thine, remain
As tokens of thy sojourn
Where little was thy gain,

Thy gardens and thy fountains,
They fade upon thy sight
Where flowers unseen are blooming
Beneath a holier light.

Whatever fortune brought thee,
Whatever memory brings,
God's last best gift remember—
Thou'rt near the King of kings.

Not far from saintlier relics
Thy mortal relics lie—
Medina's earth around them,
Beneath Medina's sky.

Here Islam's mighty powers
Lay hid within the earth
Until to worth and valour
These grains of sand gave birth.

In that same earth thou sleepest
Roofed by the same bright skies,
And round thee where thou liest
A wondrous prospect lies.

Below yon hills of Ohud
That famous fight was fought,
The fight which held the promise
Of great deeds to be wrought.

The gallant Amir Hamza
Who gave up life to gain
The glory of a martyr,
In death still guards that plain.

Beyond it fades th' horizon
O'er which the Arabs sped,
Bold children of the desert,
By Islam's honour led,

Seest thou the desert heaving
With all its warrior pride,
On Syria and on Persia
To hurl its sweeping tide?

Seest thou in yonder meadows,
Among yon scattered trees,
Full forty thousand chargers
Sniff battle in the breeze?

Seest thou the noble Khalifs,
How meek and calm they stand—
Though victors they and arbiters
Of many a conquered land?

Far off, another vision
To make thy spirit glad:
The grandeur of Granada,
The glory of Baghdad!

Here live thou—an immortal,
Where spread before thine eyes,
The living past, the vision
Of Islam's glories lies.

So near thou to the holy,
And to the great so near,
To thee I dare not offer
The tribute of a tear.

The Spirit's Paradise

NOT in those realms where rivers flow,
Of milk and honeyed wine,
Or where with mystic light aglow,
The eyes of Huris shine ;
Not there, O soaring spirit ! lies
Thy home of bliss, thy paradise.

Nor in bright bowers where the Blest
On silken seats recline,
Where with the heaven that fills the breast
Earth's memories entwine ;
Not there, O heaven-born spirit ! lies
Thy place of rest, thy paradise.

Sense-pictures these—to soothe the hearts
That still to sense incline ;
Through them high heaven the hope imparts
Of bliss that is divine ;
But not in them, O spirit ! lies
That Bliss which is thy Paradise.

Nay, far beyond the reach of thought,
Where life is love divine
And with eternal grace is fraught,
The promised Bliss is thine.
There, there, O happy spirit ! lies
Thy cradle and thy Paradise.

A Sensuous Paradise

I SEE the Realms of Bliss where toilers rest
Whose virtue flagged not in the earthly strife ;
I see them with the spirits of the Blest
Revestured in the visual garb of life.

In groves and glades where murmuring waters flow,
'Neath laden boughs in grateful shade reclined;
Far from the desert sands where tempests blow
And Death comes riding on the sun-fed wind.

For them eternal Peace; their prayer is praise
Of Him Who first the boon of Life bestowed,
Whose guidance led from error's darksome ways
O'er shining paths unto the Blest Abode.

'Mid beauteous scenes what forms around them glide,
Fairer than aught that Fancy pictured fair!
What visions rare, to poet's eyes denied,
Float round them here and fill the ethereal air!

Fair forms as softly bright as orient pearls
With eyes in which the Maker's love is blent
With reverent wonder, even as boys and girls
To wait upon the favoured guests are sent.

I pause. 'Tis not the philosophic mind
But 'tis the sense-touched, throbbing, human Heart
That in these visual forms its bliss would find—
The Heaven-born Artist revelling in his art.

Or must I dream with Plato? Seek to rise
From Form to Beauty, the self-beautiful,
The formless regent of his paradise,
Which of unborn eternal types is full?

Where shall the disembodied Spirit dwell?
In form, or formless in void nothingness?
I question Earth and Heaven but none can tell,
None save the Voice sent from on high to bless.

The Voice that rang below the vault of Heaven
When man with eager heart first gazed above.
He waited long; then was the tidings given
Of Life eternal and eternal Love.

That Voice rang out from darksome age to age—
Loud, clear and vibrant as a trumpet call.
It taught man's Soul to burst its iron cage
And soar above the World's encircling wall,

Reach out to Heaven, see a realm more bright
Than ever seen beneath the starry dome:
Of passionless Desire's pure delight,
Of Love and Grace the everlasting home,

Ordained for those who leave life's dross behind
E'en with the body sepulchred in earth;
Life's toils and trials past, who hope to find
In Death advancement to a higher birth.

That Voice I hear resounding in The Book.
It bodies forth the spirit's pure desires
As scenes in Heaven; to others who forsook
The path of Right, reveals Hell's flaming fires.

Man's mind, sense-guided, rises to a height
Surpassing sense; but Visions can appeal
Through Sense alone. God's glory and His might
Bring Thoughts that Nature's picture-scenes reveal.

Enough for me; our "Sensuous Paradise,"
By folly misconceived, is pictured Thought.
The truth it veils lies open to the wise,
Its web and woof with deepest meaning fraught.

———

Heaven and Hell

I THOUGHT of pictured Heaven and Hell,
Of horrors and delights;
I mused till waking fancy brought
To me their sounds and sights.

Is Heaven a garden of delight,
A flaming furnace Hell—
Designed for passions fair and foul?
Who knows and who can tell?

I paused; imagination dwelt
On every painted scene;
Here was a picture, there desire;
What meaning lay between?

I met a learned votary
Well-versed in sacred lore,
Wisely he spoke—but I was left
No wiser than before.

And then I sought a modern sage
Of philosophic mind,
And hoped in him (as he believed)
A shining light to find.

And well he spoke—and roundabout,
E'en like a sage profound;
Subjective and objective stores
He spread upon the ground.

Betwixt the votary and the sage
I wandered long and wide,
Till in the Book itself I found
My only trusty guide.

Spread o'er Creation's farthest bounds
The Heavenly Garden lies.
Those bounds no eye can circumscribe:
Wide as the earth and skies.

The home of purified desires
Where righteous souls shall find
Presentment of undying Bliss
Sense-pictured to the mind.

long, long I mused—and then I looked
Deep down into my heart
Till Memory showed the fair and foul
Ingrained in every part.

"Thy heaven is all the Good achieved,
Thou never canst forget;
And these foul spots that in thee burn,
Thy Hell-fire of Regret."

I have no power nor will to pierce
The brain of saint or sage.
I ope the Book and see the truth
Writ large upon its page:

"Earth renders up her dead; they come
And all past deeds review:
Each grain-weight of the foul and false,
As of the pure and true."

Lailat-ul-Qadr

THE Night of Glory! Lo! it brings to thee,
By angel hands unseen, a mystic key
To give to Faith and Hope
That long have sought to ope
The shining portals of Eternity.

It is the Night of Bliss, the Night of Grace,
More hallowed than a thousand months and day!
Behold! God's grace descends,
Each hour His blessings lends
To crown each thought and act of prayer and praise.

The light of all the stars shines in our eyes,
And in our hearts—see, Heaven mirrored lies!
Watch till each star's withdrawn
Into the folds of Dawn;
Watch till the Sun of Peace ascend the skies!

Watch till the skies their folded depths unroll,
Watch till the light of Heaven flood the soul!
The promise of the Night
Thrills into love and light,
Creation breathes, and Peace pervades the Whole!

My Poverty is my Pride

SILENT awhile the Master* stood,
And gazed upon the scene
Of heaven and earth before him spread,
And all that lay between.

A dawning smile was on his brow;
He gently waved his hand
To bid some phantom form away,
That did before him stand.

The questioning looks of those around
He needs must satisfy—
He who was sent all hearts to guide,
Ordained by One on high.

"It was the World of vain desires
And joys that will not stay;
It came tow'rd me with pomp and pride,
I beckoned it away.

I was not sent to be a king
And worldly power to prize.
Even here, upon this barren plain
God's Kingdom round me lies.

*The Great Prophet of Islam.

For me Heaven holds its promised store
Of wealth that shall abide.
Be then content my happiness,
And poverty, my pride!"

The Muslim's Paradise

"THY heart will find its paradise
Beneath thy mother's feet!"
Thus did a voice from Nature's heart
The orphan Prophet greet.

It was the voice of Nature's God,
A solace from on high;
A soothing message in response
To Nature's heart-wrung cry.

The truest love was thus proclaimed
To be the spirit's need;
The sanctity of motherhood
Thus raised into a creed!

Solace

NOR in the philosophic mind,
Nor in the poet's art
Could I that secret solace find
Which soothes the troubled heart.

But in the spirit of Islam,
Which could lost faiths redeem,
I found the 'soul's marmoreal calm'
Of Plato's cherished dream!

The Mirage in an Arabian Desert*

ABOVE, a blazing ruthless sky;
Around, a dreary desert wide
O'er which no winged life may fly;
A vibrant haze and distance hide
The sands' dim contour from the eye—
Save where some grim hill's rugged side
Doth seem to stoop as from on high
To seek some rivulet's trickling tide.

Ah! water in these regions bare,
There's none to see above the ground,
Where hidden springs are far and rare
And seldom by the wanderer found.
There's nought where'er his footsteps fare
But wind-swept dune and sand-blown mound;
A canopy of sunlit air
Is stretched above him, and around.

But pause! yon lake or shimmering stream
Whose margin waving palms adorn—
Is it a vision or a dream
Of hope and sateless craving born?
Full of fresh life his heart doth seem,
His weary limbs no more outworn,
His eyes with sudden gladness beam
As in a new life's rising morn.

How lightsome now his footsteps rove
By azure marge, by covert green,
By silvery tarn, by nodding grove
Where all is joyous, all serene!
Gay fancy's glowing pictures move
As onward glides th' alluring scene;
The scorching sands through which he strove
Have vanished—as though never seen.

---

* A vision actually seen by me on my journey to Medina.

But soon, as by a wizard's rod,
Whose chaunted charm controls its sway,
The pictured palm-grove, sward and sod
And lake and rivulet melt away!
They fade—the weary waste he trod
Returns—and with it heart's dismay.
He bows his head in pray'r to God,.
His foot then plods the pathless way!

The Way to Medina

ALOOF and grim the mountains stand
Where not a plant will grow ;
Where silent heaves a sea of sand
Beneath the sun's fierce glow.

A pilgrim bends, with labouring breath,
O'er scorching sand and stones
Marked by that monument of death—
A camel's bleaching bones.

He gazes on the mountain heights
And on the desert bare,—
If life presents no soft delights,
Death has no terrors there.

How leisurely that caravan
Of camels passes by !
How, lurching o'er the gravelly span,
The creaking motors fly !

He stands at gaze with longing eyes,
Uplifts an eager hand . . .
And as the last one mocking flies
He sinks upon the sand.

Then creeps to an acacia-tree
With sparse but friendly shade,
And 'neath that thorny canopy
His listless form is laid.

To his own land his fancy flies,
To roads and roadside trees,
Where, close at hand, the well supplies
Its bounty, and the breeze

Through rustling leaves will softly come
To cool his brow to rest,
And birds will chirp and insects hum
To soothe his lonely breast.

But here—his heart well understands
How death can fears defy.
Here life and death are joining hands ;
'Tis one to live or die !

On, on with striving soul untired,
With tottering steps, and slow ;
Fainting, but with faith's frenzy fired,
Still onward he must go . . . .

Onward, beyond those hills, that plain
Where yonder vision* flies . .
Where—could he yonder heights but gain—
The Chosen City lies.

Chosen of him whose presence shot
Through darkness living light,
Of him who unto mankind brought
The message of its might.

Faith gives him strength and quickens love,
And hope soon quells despair.
The Master beckons from above;
So onward he must fare.

New life is in his limbs, he treads
With firmer step the sand
That still immeasurably spreads
Betwixt him and the land

* Mirage.

He fain would reach. Oh, for that hour
When, near and yet more near,
Those symbols of mysterious power,
Medina's hills appear!

But now the bitter, bitter strife,
The endless, endless way ....
'Twixt life and death, 'twixt death and life
Unending seems the day.

Yet onward, onward, onward still
He drags his weary weight,—
A martyr of unbending will,
A votary of fate.

At last, at last he gains the height
From whence his eye can roam
To scenes where, conscious of its might,
Islam first found a home.

There, cradled in a happy vale,
Medina's relics lie—
He gasps, as though his heart would fail—
The Green Dome strikes his eye!

That trembling, rapturous glance, the first
So stirs some passion deep,
Had he a hundred hearts, they'd burst;
A hundred eyes—they'd weep!

Man knows not why so throbs the heart
And bids the eyes o'erflow.
No power that secret will impart,
And none shall ever know.

He gazes on the rocky plain
That overlooks the town.
Its verge his weary feet must gain
Before the sun goes down.

"Ah ! there, where yon white turrets shine,
At eventide to rest !
And at our Master's holy shrine
To end my life-long quest ! "

He stands where light from heaven is shed,
His Maker to adore—
He finds his quest—he bows his head..........
And sinks to rise no more !

Impressions of the Haj Journey*

Jedda

A SHALLOW bay of rippling waters green
That sportive Nature made for mimic storms.
Landward, above the water's edge is seen
A thin long line of houses stretched betwixt
The lapping wavelets and the upland slope
Whose tawny sands adorn the horizon's rim.
The picture haunts the memory, where it glows
With softened shades of colour not its own—
A picture, or a vision, or a dream !
Mirage-like seems its unsubstantial grace
When viewed afar, but when the tossing launch
Has touched the wooden steps along the quay,
The vision fades. The traveller's eyes then see
A row of massive buildings, plain and drab,
That runs along the coast. He passes through
A long, broad, empty, cheerless stone-paved hall
To show his goods and pay the customs dues.
Ordeals passed, he is taken by his guide,

*These hurried sketches have remained as isolated pieces. They were not worked into a complete whole.—Ed.

The Moakkil, to his own house to lodge,
Or elsewhere, till his passport has been seen
And checked before the Consul's officers.
And then the agents of the Arab State
Provide the assembled pilgrims with cars
And camels (for the poorer) issuing permits
(Called, Koshans) for the journey to Mecca
Some pilgrims are so wrapped in holy thoughts,
They have but little time to see the sights
Of Jedda save perhaps the eating places
Where flies and pilgrims meet as fellow guests!
The tables spread along the roadside bear
Inviting loads of bread, ill-roasted meats,
And watery stew—all humble friends in need.
Some pilgrims whose devotion is skin deep
And has not dulled the keener zest of life,
Find time and energy to roam about
And see the quiet, lazy, sleepy town.
Large open spaces here and there they pass.
Flanked by tall houses where no life is seen.
Fronting the sea there stand some stately piles,
Clean-painted solid blocks of houses where,
High on the tops, slow rippling in the air,
The pilgrim's eye with rising wonder sees
The national flags of some of Europe's Powers.
Their presence there betokens, he may hope,
A friendly interest and friendly care
To help the Arab once again to tread
With steady pace the path he trod before—
Of knowledge, culture, honour, freedom, fame.

Journey to Mecca

WE tread on hallowed ground, the Realm of Peace,
No fosse nor rampart round it, and no tower;
No martial watch and ward, no sentinel—
Its bounds are guarded by the breath of Faith!

Since first the Word went forth "God's peace shall bide
Inviolate in these precincts," e'en that Word,
More potent far than might of armed men,
Hath bidden feud and fray and slaughter cease.
Time was when every valley, hill and plain,
So silent now, did harrowing tales repeat
Of tribal raids and kinsmen's deadly strife,
And blood-revenge. All, all is peaceful now.
Yon herbless plains lie basking in the sun,
Yon dark-browed mountains frown in solitude.
The patient camels pasturing on the heights
Proclaim the reign of peace; bare-headed men
In pilgrim-weeds attest the reign of Faith
Upon the sands below. All, all is still.

* * *

The Haram or Sanctuary

What line unseen divides this Realm of Peace
From all the world of passion, hatred, strife?
There's nought to mark it save these pillars white;
These two white pillars of rough masonry
That form the entrance, one on either side.
They form a roadway through which pilgrims pass
With loud 'Labbaik' and silent fervent prayers
To be absolved and saved from torments dire
In life to come, that flesh and blood and bones
May rest immune from Hell's fierce raging fire.
Here all whose fearful, hopeful spirit views
Hell's flames ablaze and hears their vengeful roar,
Feel rescued or respited once their feet
Have crossed the bound and gained the Sanctuary:
Faith is the secret of this Realm of Peace,
A mystic feeling creeps along the nerves,
A mystic expectation thrills the heart.
With eager souls and fervent prayers all move

Onward in silence tow'rd the Sacred Shrine,
Expectant, thrilled while fancy bodies forth
Its sombre massive form in pictures seen:
Its courtyard vast, its stately colonnade,
Its four sides sentinelled by minarets
From whose high tops rings out the call to prayer
And aerial voices bear the echoing strains.
At fancy's touch its forty gates ope wide
To welcome them into that Ancient House
Where first the One True God was found and worshipped
By Abraham and his offsprings. Here they came
'Mongst rugged hills and barren vales to dwell,
To raise His fane and worship Him alone.
The Pilgrim's emulous heart is stirred, beats high
With quickening pulse as through the deep-laid sand
The labouring car moves on. The world has ceased
To touch the heart awhile—the fire of faith
Glows in its darkest depths to purify
All thoughts unclean, all selfish vain desires,
All taint of sin contracted in life's course.

* * *

On towards Mecca

The car moves on and still before us lies
A dreary waste of sand but for those hills
That darkly rise to girdle it around.
A barren waste where life of man and beast
Would be a lingering death did not the Power
That nurtures all Creation means provide
To save it and sustain. A hidden power
Lies in these sun-baked sands where dwarfish shrubs
Grow sparse and scattered. Even these low tufts
Of reedy grass are Nature's provender
For man's true helpmates— camel, horse and mule.
For man himself, the date-palm was his food
Until he could with toilsome labour raise.

A scanty crop of corn, and milk and meat
That from his cattle came. A nomad he,
With house on shoulder roamed from camp to camp
And found the little that his life did need.
His needs too few, God's bounty limitless,
Though oft unseen. 'Twas so till came the Word
That flashed this truth on him like light of day,
And stilled the craving heart of discontent:

* * *

Long did I gaze upon those barren sands,
Long did I gaze upon those herbless hills;
And long, too long a feeling like despair,
Fed by a nameless fear oppressed my heart.
Long did I ponder on the lot of man
To these grim scenes consigned. At last there came
Into my listening heart these words of hope:
" God's bounty! none can reckon all His gifts—
Uncounted and unmeasured are His stores."
My heart was calmed and lifted was the veil
From eyes and heart. A sacred moment that.
Before mine inward sight a figure passed,
Human, yet more than human, and I saw
Where'er he moved these characters of light,
Until I seemed to hear a solemn sound
That onward rolled and overspread the Earth:
" God's bounty! Wouldst thou reckon all His gifts?
" Uncounted and unmeasured are His stores"
Where'er he moved around his figure glowed
A luminous force, an atmosphere of life,
A radiating power, an effluence
Of consecrated will that could illume
The darkest corners of the human heart.
'Twas he who could remould the world of life
By glad submission to the will Divine.
" Look here;" he seemed to say " These are my realms—

These sandy tracts whereon in years gone by
One man was taught by Heavenly grace to build
A house, a shrine, a Kingdom in His name
Who owns all heaven and earth but had no house.
Come ye unto His house with heart devout
And step into His Kingdom, Earth and Heaven !"

* * *

On, on through parting sands our car rolls on—
Creaking and grunting, lurching, labouring on
Towards Mecca—towards the Ancient House and Shrine.
The barren sands, the herbless hills have changed
Their aspect grim and smile on us like friends.
And spread their arms as though to welcome all
Whom faith has taught the pilgrims' weeds to wear ;
Who, shrouded like the dead in cloths unsewn
(Beggar and king alike) have come from far.
And yet will come until this earth shall last.
Men, women, children—some infirm and old,
Some weak and ailing, less alive than dead ;
All, all of them by fervent faith inspired,
And by the love of him who taught them faith.
The man whose name is as a fount of light
In every Muslim's heart ; the man of men,
The Warner he, the Prophet God-ordained
Who led mankind from darkness unto light.

* * *

The car rolls on, the driver at his will
Halts where he sees a cluster of rude huts
Thatched with palm-leaves, beneath whose grateful shade
Are settees placed of rudest workmanship,
To serve as seats by day and beds by night—
A welcome boon to weary travellers.

Here in small custard glasses tea is served,
Hot tea well-sugared, innocent of milk.
You must not ask what hands have brewed and
poured
The amber liquor in those little cups,
How many pilgrims' mouths have touched the
brims.
Here men are equal, and God's subjects they.
Here, on these sands, beneath this burning sky
Equality is not a man-made creed—
A specious theme on revolution's lips.
It is no institution but a feeling—
An instinct and an impulse of the heart.
By God 'twas given and by God preserved,
Fostered by breath of Islam through the ages.
Our driver hands a cup to us from his,
And we to him from our own little tray
In friendly courtesy.
The cafe-keeper or his negro page,
The village constable or any man
That may be present is our fellow guest.
It is a spacious world where Nature rules,
And not convention born of sickly brains.

* * *

On, on we move until there comes in view
A small, square, whitewashed building newly built
For pilgrims' comfort by the present King.
A man of balanced power and noble heart,
A far-famed warrior dreaded by his foes,
He's justly more renowned as one who brought
Peace to a lawless land that knew no peace.
His is the master-mind, the master-hand
That has the feuds of jealous tribes controlled,
Made robbers and marauders, mendicants!
The desert wilds where caravans were robbed,
And pilgrims slaughtered for a trifling gain

Are now the home of peace from bourne to bourne.
A man of Patriarchal dignity,
Reminder of the greatness of the past,
Who at his post a fearless watchman stands
To guard Arabia's Peace,

* * *

We halt a while.
To see the Hostel with its bare white rooms,
Unpaved, unfurnished yet, but cool and clean.
Then on we go, and as the hills draw near,
Below them on our left a palm-grove lies,
A fertile Wadi in a barren land.
A passing thought, for mind and heart are fixed
On sights yet undisclosed, and on we move.

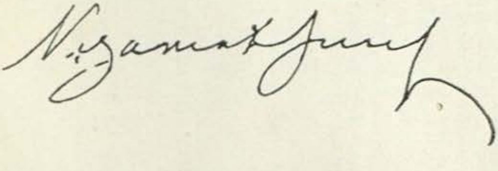
(*Unfinished*)



NAWAB NIZAMAT JUNG,
Age 75.



As Political Minister, 1926.



PART II

Rudel of Blaye and Other Poems

Rudel of Blaye

Prelude

DUMB longings of the heart! What may ye be?
Bright stars that o'er Life's dim horizon shine?
Rich gems that darkly slumber in the mine?
Or pearls serene in Life's tempestuous sea?
Whate'er ye be, ye are no fantasy
That mocks with baffling hope sad hearts that pine;
Ye come as heralds from that realm divine
Whose light unseen pervades Life's sombre mystery.

Alike o'er hearts of beggars and of kings
Your subtle spell; Faith follows in your train
To starry heights whence she a glimpse may gain
Of light eternal far-flashed from Angel-wings.
Your birth within the heart the vision brings
Of happier life celestial Powers ordain
For man whose suffering spirit shall attain
The heaven where Love is born, whence deathless Beauty springs.

Immortal Beauty! Be thou still the theme
Of the heart's worship and its fervent song!
Still let the soul, by Faith and Love made strong,
See in God's works, though as a transient gleam,
The mystic light that veils thy form supreme!
Still let thy fleeting images that throng
Before the mind their magic spell prolong
Until man's life on earth becomes a heavenly dream!

Thine are our visions of Eternity;
Thine too the songs that tremble on the tongue,
As echoes of celestial songs, unsung.
'Tis thine to stir the soul to ecstasy
With wafted strains of far-heard minstrelsy
From realms where Faith and Hope are ever young,
Where dawning stars, like blossoms newly sprung
Find life's renewal in Love's hidden harmony.

* * *

OFT through the mist of bygone years a ray
Of wakening Memory flits across the skies.
It comes from haunted realms where treasured lies
Full many a marvel of an elder day.
Then shines the field of fame, the pageant gay
Where Valour claims and Beauty gives the prize.
Then glory gilds the nameless graves whence rise
Shades of the mighty dead in Honour's bright array.

Dreams of my youth, they fade but cannot die;
Theirs are the songs that, silenced, echo still
Within my heart, its twilight gloom to thrill
With yearning hopes that waken but a sigh.
Ah, would they could regain their native sky
And the void air with radiant visions fill!
Broken the wizard wand and lost the skill
That could awake them all where low entombed they lie.

They lie entombed, those bright-wing'd visions all,
Where sleeps the splendour of Life's yesterdays—
With vanished suns, and moons, and faded bays,
And all the buried pomp of bower and hall.
And they are gone who could their shades recall,
Who had the wizard wand, the magic phrase
To wake to life the legends and the lays
And pageants of past years that still my heart enthral.

But now another vision greets my sight:
The sun shines o'er the lordly towers of Blaye
Where Rudel stands. His gaze is far away,
His spirit wandering in lands more bright,
Where Fancy sheds the glamour of her light.
Enrapt he stands—once debonair and gay—
A Prince in whom the poet's soul doth sway
With its own pensive grace the hauteur of the knight.

Erstwhile amongst his proud but thoughtless peers
He toyed with life and love, and now his lyre
In graver mood doth graver hopes inspire
Than in a Troubadour light fancy rears.
And yearnings vague—too dim for smiles or tears—
Within his bosom stir love's smould'ring fire,
Till like the fabled Phœnix from her pyre
Love bursts again from out the ashes of dead years.

To him did Heaven vouchsafe a princely throne
And vassals true, a smiling fair domain
Where many a vine-clad slope and harvest plain
Might teach man's heart God's providence to own;
But these are not for him. He stands alone
And deems life barren, earthly pleasures vain
Till Faith should conquer Fate and Love should gain
Some guiding sign from Heaven that might all ills atone.

As from the East the roseate sunlight springs
And spreads along the skies in golden flame,
So from the East the glory of a name
Was spreading far and wide: in courts of kings,
In camps, in marts, in lordly halls where rings
The minstrel's harp with notes of high acclaim,
Still was the theme of Odierna's fame
Wafted from ear to ear on herald Rumour's wings.

"The East sends forth full many an argosy
Of silk and samite, precious gems and pearls;
But with the radiant brow and glossy curls
Of her who holds yon Orient lands in fee
There's naught on earth can vie, naught in the sea
That by her gallant kingdom heaves and swirls.
'Tis she whose queenly hand the flag unfurls,
in Paynim lands afar, of Europe's chivalry."

So sang the minstrel-bards when Beauty's power
And Knighthood's prowess were the favoured
theme.
Prince Rudel heard: he sees as in a dream
A castle, proud with battlement and tower,
Within whose walls through gilded hall and bower
Of princely grandeur swells a gorgeous stream
Of warriors, prelates, citizens that seem
Each in his wonted place to wait the audience hour.

And that fair form? 'Tis she who rules their fate:
The Countess-Queen—The star of Tripoli!
Fair, virtuous, brave, high-placed by destiny,
Her beauty well becomes her regal state.
Those bearded counsellors that on her wait,
Gravely they bend to praise each wise decree
That guards the subjects' life and liberty
Alike from kindred guile and aliens' deadly hate.

Ah! beauty is a thing of earthly mould
If but in form and feature it reside:
Dust unto dust; so ends the pomp and pride
Of form and feature when the heart is cold.
But when immortal spirit doth unfold
Through mortal form His grace that will abide,
Then beauty is of heavenly birth—a guide
To realms eternal where Heaven's glories are
unrolled!

"For beauty such as this my heart did pine,
And now it comes to haunt my waking dreams.
Her's is a soul illumined with the beams
Of truth that comes to man by grace divine.
Soul of her soul, these through her beauty shine—
Veiled radiance from the Infinite! Meseems
Her beauty is the smile of God! It gleams
From yonder lands afar to light this heart of mine!"

To Rudel's heart, long wont to beat alone
Communing with the unseen forms of air,
(Which glowing Fancy pictured passing fair),
This message came as from some upper zone,
A heavenly mandate in an Angel's tone
It bade him to the Holy Land repair,
A Pilgrim-knight, to seek and sue the Fair,
And win renown and grace—to dastard hearts unknown.

From lowly earth upsprings the fairest flower,
Its form a wonder in bright hues arrayed;
Its breath a joyous spirit that has strayed
On faery wings from some far Eden bower.
So now in Rudel's heart the immortal power
Of Love has burgeoned, Beauty's light has made
Its tender buds to bloom in shine and shade,
And blooming thus outlive his being's earthly hour!

* * *

THUS days went by. "There's nought in life he sees,"
So said his comrades, "save one vision bright:
A fair hand beckoning from a land of light!
Nought else hath power his wayward heart to please;
He shuns the business of his realm, and flees
From festive haunts and, listless day and night
He languishes in dreams, and in despite
Of knighthood's noble vows he courts ignoble ease.

We go, a joyous troupe with hound and horn,
What time the stars are fading in the sky,
To bid him up unto the chase to hie,
And with a blithesome greeting rouse the Morn.
He joins the chase, but with a heart forlorn;
And if perchance he sees his falcon fly
To strike her quarry in the eastern sky,
Then to the gates of Dawn his roving thoughts are borne!

Or should the hounds pursue the flying deer
Eastward, he follows far beyond their flight,
His gaze fixed on the rolling orb of light
But blind to aught else in his wild career.
He dreams that every league shall bring him near—
If Love and Fate but guide his steps aright—
Near and yet nearer to that region bright
Where Beauty shames the glow of every starry sphere!"

They spake in scorn, though oft in mirthful strain,
As men who in their secret heart resent
A friend's neglect when, on grave thoughts intent,
He deems life's lighter joys and pastimes vain.

And some there were that loudly did complain
Of vigour wasted, life's high ardour spen
On brain-sick fancies breeding discontent,
And fair illusive dreams that bring nor bliss nor gain.

And others vowed 'twas some malignant power—
Faery or goblin—wrought a potent spell
To blast his mind with ecstasy and swell
The noisome humours that his heart devour.
Yet others deemed some adverse Star did shower
Its baleful beams the night his birth befell,
And touched his heart with fantasy to quell
High knighthood's vaunted vows and pride's ancestral dower.

Unheeded passed such gossip—if perchance
It reached the Prince's ear; he knew full well;
What idle tales the idle tongue can tell;
He knew how envious malice can advance
From dubious truths to falsehood to enhance
The evil it designs. He knew the hell
Within man's heart, and yet unheeded fell
Upon his ear the sounds that wave-like sped through France.

PRINCE RUDEL had a friend whose loyal heart
Pure as his own and dauntless, laboured still
For others' weal. To him the whispered ill,
That flew around was as a poisoned dart
Of which his bosom felt the rankling smart.
" For Rudel's sake I would with right goodwill
Brook Rudel's wrath" said he, " So to fulfil
In honour's sacred name true love and friendship's
part.

The glow of anger than the blush of shame
Were meeter far for him; nor shall I tire
Until I rouse him from his dream and fire
His noble soul with bright ambition's flame.
I'll bid him choose betwixt my praise and blame;
My love is deep, it well might scorn his ire
And tell bold truths such ardour to inspire
As might once more redeem the glory of his name."

Resolving thus, the sylvan haunts he sought
Where Rudel's heart its crowding cares beguiled,
And hoped to find perchance in woodland wild
Balm for the pain with which man's heart is fraught.
For often in some lone, sequestered spot
Hath Nature like a kindly mother smiled
Upon the heart, to life unreconciled,
That dreams of Heaven on earth, and, waking
finds it not.

Beneath an ancient tree whose tangled boughs
Upon the sward fantastic shades had thrown,
The Poet-Prince sat musing, and alone,
His eyes half closed beneath his lowering brows.
No wild-birds' warbling could his spirit rouse
From that deep trance wherein the sweet sad tone
Of far rills murmuring o'er their beds of stone
Seemed deeply blended with his yearnings and his
vows.

He neither heard nor saw the friend draw nigh,
Who now before him stood with gaze intent
Upon his listless form. With forehead bent
He sat and moved not. Then a deep-breathed sigh
The silence broke. 'Twas not a love-sick eye
That glanced around; reproach and discontent
That he would fain conceal, were subtly blent
In that fix'd gaze with which he did his friend espy.

In answer to his questioning gaze the friend
Thus greeted him: "Fair Prince, a boon I crave:
Forgive the bold intrusion if I gave
Offence by coming here, and gracious lend
Thy princely ear with patience till the end
To what I will unfold. 'Tis thine to save
A precious life from an untimely grave.
Dire ills the Stars forebode—which kindly Heaven forfend!"

"Scan thou the skies," quoth Rudel, "ask each star
'Is Fate perverse or Providence unkind?'
As our own eyes the starry orbs are blind
To that which our own heart can make or mar!
If faith and hope within our bosom are,
As God's own light behind a veil, enshrined,
What need of question? Look and we shall find
Within our hearts the guide whose aid is never far.

Valour and Faith, twin stars beyond the Pole,—
These be the orbs on which our fate is writ—
Unfading stars that from the Infinite
With silent sway our destinies control!
Are we not part of the Eternal Whole?
What need to strain our eyes, to goad our wit
To read the stars by which the skies are lit?
Read we the script of Doom in our prophetic soul!

Thou know'st mine inmost soul has treasured long—
E'en as a casket hides a jewel bright—
Some unseen Splendour from the realms of light,
Some far-heard echo of immortal Song.
These bid me fare, in faith and valour strong,
Forth on a quest where Beauty doth invite,
Where Honour beckons from his azure height,
And Glory sits enthroned amidst her starry throng."

"Is it for Holy War or love, forsooth,
Thy knightly breast the Holy Cross would wear?
Is it the love of fame, or of some fair
That thus allures the restless heart of youth?
Nay, frown not. Friendship gives thee bitter truth
In lieu of honeyed lies,—and it would dare
To rouse thy wrath if it could thus repair
The wrong thou dost thy fame by such a quest uncouth.

What boots it thus to throw God's gifts away
And chase some shadowy form of Fantasy?
Love! There are lustrous eyes would dance with glee
In yonder bowers to hear thine amorous lay,
Hearts that would throb and thrill the livelong day
Unto thy plaintive harp's sweet melody.
War wouldst thou have? France claims thy fealty;
The field of Honour's *here*—come, arm thee for the fray!

Thy home and Seignorie, thy tower and town
Wouldst quit for some fond vow, some fancied claim?
'Tis idle quest: thus saith the voice of blame,
And that loud voice thy feeble voice will drown.
A sigh perchance for unfulfilled renown,
A tear perchance for love's remembered name—

These may be thine, but not a hero's fame,
Nor thine the glory, Rudel, of a martyr's crown!"

Quoth Rudel, "When I girt mine armour on
I pledged my heart to Love, to Heaven my vow;
I sought the star of Faith on Beauty's brow,
And in her eyes the light of Truth that shone.
'Twas oft a phantom light and soon was gone.
Ah, none was there to whom my soul could bow
In love and adoration—none till now—
Whose honour and whose faith my heart could lean upon.

From night till morn, from morn again till night,
All lost in dreams to see *such* form and face,
Through Fancy's wide domain my path I'd trace
To some far heaven that hid her from my sight.
There from behind a veil her presence bright—
An unseen emblem of Celestial Grace—
Allured my spirit, which but seemed to chase
Some pale illusive star that mocked me in its flight!

She was not far and yet I found her not.
Whether in life or but an empty dream,
Fair to my raptured fancy did she seem
With haunting eyes that could not be forgot.
I felt her presence still, though well I wot
'Twas not her self as fain my heart would deem;
'Twas void as air, unbodied as a beam
That cheers the hermit lone in midnight cell or grot.

One eve at banquet, when the trophied hall
Rang to the harp's proud notes and minstrel-lays,
Whose theme was Valour's meed and Beauty's praise,
I marked mine armour glittering on the wall,
I heard my war-steed neighing in his stall,
I saw the mail-clad knights of other days,

Whose glory shone the brighter for the rays
Of ladies' lustrous eyes that did their hearts enthral.

Some charméd word my spirit seemed to wait:
It was a name to crown the minstrel's song,
And broke the spell. Loud echoes did prolong
The bard's high strain, and smote me where I sate.
Then all at once my spirit soared elate,
Girt with ethereal pinions swift and strong;
A light fell on the dream I'd cherished long,
And in that omen blest I saw the hand of Fate!

Blent with the clang of armour and the sound
Of warlike trump that calls to glory's field,
Mixt with the music fierce of war and shield
What heavenly strains within mine ears resound!
They come from far and fill the air around
With magic spell to which my soul I yield
Though skilled my hand the warrior's sword to wield,
It wakes the poet's lyre to harmonies profound.

Ay, thus from far a joyous message brings
To me each morn the rolling orb of day.
He tells of brighter lands beneath the sway
Of one from whose all-hallowed beauty springs
The joy of faith on rapture's fiery wings.
And she doth smile on valour's proud array
And shows to dauntless hearts the untrodden way
Of glory far above the thronéd pride of kings.

Where bright swords glitter and proud pennons wave,
Where many a steel-clad bosom throbs with glee
To thrilling notes of martial minstrelsy
That points the way to glory or the grave,
Be mine the foremost lance amongst the brave,
As mine the foremost rank amongst the free!

When such my vows, O question not if she
Will guide to Honour's goal or yield the boon I
crave.

Not mine the love, that seeking soft delight,
Asks for a sensuous heaven to be blest;
No caitiff's soul I harbour in my breast,
That might attaint with shame a belted knight.
True as my trusty blade, and stainless bright
As is my well-known helm with pluméd crest.
E'en such my soul whose honour these attest—
And such a stainless soul would with her
soul unite."

* * *

THE sun shines fair upon the castled brow
Of Blaye, where Rudel stands. Before his eyes,
Spread out beyond the fosse, his city lies
Garbed in its evening beauty. There e'en now
With busy hands a hundred craftsmen bow
Their heads o'er tasks allotted : upward flies
The spark from many an anvil ; thither hies
The shepherd from his fold, the peasant from his plough.

There's noise and stir in every crowded street ;
There's noise and stir in every bower and hall.
Knight, squire and yeoman arm at duty's call,
And parting friends and parting kinsmen meet
And with foreboding hearts each other greet.
Prince Rudel's eye from o'er the rampart wall
Roves to these busy scenes, and they recall
His friend's last warning words which now he doth repeat :

" '*A sigh perchance for unfulfilled renown,*
A tear perchance for love's remembered name,
These may be thine, but not a hero's fame,
Nor thine the glory of a martyr's crown.'
What though my light like yonder sun's go down
In seas unknown to hide its deathless flame,
Heedless, like him, of mankind's praise or blame,
Heedless, like him, I go, of Fortune's smile or frown.

Bright orb ! Dost thou not from the East convey
Unto the West a splendour not thine own ?
A mystic charm from living Beauty's throne ?
A grace divine transmitted with each ray ?
To me thou bringest with the light of day
Some faith new-born, some yearning erst unknown,
Dreams that are Truth, hopes that sublimer grown,
To some far Heaven of Heavens can guide my wandering way.

Ere thou, O sun, upon the morrow morn
Hast flung thy first bright beams on land and sea,
Far on the waters' breast my bark shall be,
By favouring gales and gliding waves upborne.
With lightsome heart I go, nor leave forlorn
A loving mother's heart to grieve for me;
Nor leave behind to wail my destiny,
A gentle sister's heart with daily anguish torn."

* * *

"AT last upon the waves my bark shall ride;
Land of my valiant sires, a long adieu!
Oh, by thy shores fast fading into blue,
What dreams, what haunting memories abide!
They'll dwell with me when roving far and wide
In lands unknown my Vision I pursue,
By surer, sterner quest to seek anew
And win the baffling prize so long by Fate denied."

Thus to his knights: "O flower of Chivalry,
True as your blades and trusty, valiant, wise!
I read this query in your wondering eyes:
What means this errant quest by land and sea?
Know, Eastward shines the star of Destiny,
Eastward for me the Land of Promise lies;
From Paynim shores afar 'neath alien skies
Fate sounds the trump of fame and Beauty calls for me.

On yonder desert shores extending wide
Your eyes shall see what dismal scenes are spread—
All Europe's might, once by her monarchs led,
By swarthy Paynim hordes is now defied!
Shame sears the heart; O let yon sands be dyed
With Paynim blood and make all ocean red!
On, on to Fame—or Honour's gory bed!
Vow to avenge once more our nation's humbled pride!"

"On, on" they shout "to war and victory!
No tempests daunt us and no waves affright.
Proud on the billows' crest like sea-gull white
Shall ride our bark that scorns an angry sea.
Nor time nor toil nor distance reckon we;
Toil is our pastime, danger, our delight;
On, on we press wherever these invite,
True hearts and loyal hands for faith and fealty.

Be faith our guide, and fame our guerdon still!
We heed not perils with which war is rife:
The poisoned Moorish dart, the assassin's knife
We laugh to scorn; 'tis ours to conquer Ill.
Our hearts beat high their purpose to fulfil,
And glory shall be ours in death or life!
There is a heaven in the heart of strife—
To which we'll carve our way with faith and dauntless will!

Ay, thus of yore the errant knights did roam
With buckler raised, and poiséd lance in rest—
The pride and power of their arms to test
'Gainst Dragon's den and Wizard's magic dome.
Let churls and dastards seek to bide at home
When glory calls! *We* harbour in our breast
The ancient fire, in peril seek the zest
Of fame until our hearts shall sleep in mouldering loam!"

* * *

WITH swelling sails the gallant ship doth fly
Before the lusty winds full joyously;
Through calm she glides, through storm she battles free;
And day by day the warriors' hearts beat high.
But long the days that with slow pace go by,
And long the nights upon the boundless sea.
Blue waves around, o'erhead the canopy,
All azure and bright gold, of cloudless Southern sky.

Of days and nights they counted full one score
Ere storm-clouds gathering hid the light of heaven,
And lashed by furious gales the bark was driven,
'Mid lightning's flash and thunder's deafening roar,
Where to the leeward lay Italia's shore,
Striving for life—with mast and sail-yards riven—
As erst the Trojan's fate-borne ship had striven,
That to Lavinian walls sack'd Ilium's relics bore.

O winds, fierce Titans that would rend the skies!
Your might uphurls the torn depths of the sea
Against the trembling heavens. Ye are free
From man's dominion in your dread emprise.
The Lightning is your minister that flies
On lethal wings surcharged with Fate's decree.
The Thunder is your voice as in fell glee
Ye wave your hundred arms and from your lairs arise.

Unbounded is your scope 'neath heaven's high dome,
For winds and waters own no Cæsar's sway.
Your empire stands; it hath outlived the day
Of pomp and power and pride of haughty Rome.
Her pomp, unstable as the white sea-foam,
Her glory, transient as the scattered spray,—
Their relics all lie mouldering in decay:
The Forum in its pride, the halls of Cæsar's home.

When down ye swoop on earth from heights sublime,
Ye are dread symbols of Eternal Power!
With mighty wings outspread ye hover o'er
The scattered wrecks of many an age and clime.
Whilst yet unconquered Rome was in her prime
Her Eagles ye outsoared in triumph's hour,
And made her thrice-victorious legions cower.
Roll on, roll on, dread powers, unto the end of Time!

Of travails borne, of dangers overpast,
Of hair-breadth 'scapes from terrors of the main,
And how the knights did timely shelter gain
From whelming billow and from whirling blast,
Upon Sicilian shores by fortune cast,
What boots it now to tell? 'Twas all in vain!
Now mark what doom the heavenly Powers ordain;
How Beauty's smile doth crown Love's eager quest at last!

Their bark not doomed to perish in a storm,
Their bones not doomed to lie beneath the deep,
Harmless around them did the whirlwinds sweep
Harmless around them did the billows swarm;
The winds abated and each heart grew warm
In gratitude to Him Whose care doth keep,
Below the sea as on the mountain steep,
The meanest worm unscathed, that owns a living form.

The bark it drifted on to Sicily,
And every warrior's breast was filled with cheer
As from afar the coast-line did appear
Of some fair sunlit land beyond the sea.
The bark it drifted on, and merrily
The blue waves rippled as the shore drew near.
O hope and joy in place of doubt and fear!
Is this the wished-for goal? The land of Destiny?

• • •

IN Southern climes the Lord of living light
Pours forth on sea and land his golden rays;
All Nature glows, the heavens are a blaze
Of cloudless splendour e'en from morn till night,
But in those beauteous realms, so calm and bright,
Lie treacherous haunts where marsh and swamp upraise
Of subtle poison-fumes a lucent haze,
And wooing gales convoy, unknown, the deadly blight.

Such was thy fatal gift, O smiling land!
To him who storm-tossed gained thy Classic shore;
Unscathed, 'mid lightning's flash and thunder's roar,
Who could the whirling tempest's rage withstand.
Say, was he destined but to reach thy strand
To vail his pluméd helm and rise no more?
To quench the flame that in his heart he bore,
And thus to be laid low as by an unseen hand?

As falls some stately keep by lightning riven,
That had the stress of many a siege withstood;
As falls some oak, the monarch of the wood,
'Gainst whom in vain a hundred storms had striven—
Thus was he doomed to fall, by fortune driven
On sunlit shores where dire ill omens brood.
Thus was he doomed to seek Life's promised good
At Death's relentless hands! Yea, such the will of Heaven.

Earth, sea and sky seem wrapt in starless gloom,
Thick clouds of darkness roll before his eyes;
The shades of night surround him; low he lies
With frenzied gaze: "Is this the eclipse of Doom?
And what are those—yon giant forms that loom,"
He wildly asks, "against yon Eastern skies?"
Athwart his gaze some unknown horror flies
As raving he doth lie within a living tomb.

"From yonder clouds," he shrieks, "what fiends
descend
To drag me down into some ocean-cave!
I sink—I sink beneath the roaring wave
Where hissing serpent-forms around me bend
And with foul fangs my cracking heart-strings rend.
O God in Heaven! In Thy mercy save!"
He calls on death; for rest his heart doth crave;
Death seems to hover nigh—but yet 'tis not the end.

Not yet the end: a hundred torments more
Bear thou, O bursting heart, O writhing frame!
But let not anguish thy strong manhood shame,
Though life be oozing out at every pore!
"Who whispers in mine ear: 'God's reign is o'er—
His love, His mercy but an empty name?'
O Lord!" he moans, "Hast thou no power to tame
The Arch-fiend in his pride, as in the days
of yore?"
While thus upon his couch Prince Rudel lay
Recounting horrors by grim Fancy bred,
A saint-like form was bending o'er his head:
"Foul fiends, avaunt!" his voice was heard to say.
"The night of horror passes and the day
Will soon bring back peace, faith, and patience
fled.
Heaven's Grace descends, its hallowed light is shed
Upon the stainless soul ye fain would lead astray."

All through the dreary watches of the night
The sick man raved; his faithful Squire, his Leech
And his Confessor whispered each to each
Foreboding fears that did their souls affright,
Till in the Eastern heavens a streak of light
Appeared and morning smiled on sea and beach.
The sun arose and his glad beams did reach,
In showers of scattered gold, the eyelids of the
knight.

" Yon sun, " he cries, " darts arrows through my brain!
I'm flung aloft into his flaming zone,
And now I stand upon his blazing throne
That pours a flood of fire o'er hill and plain!
My limbs are dust—my heart doth crave in vain
The Lady of my dreams and bliss unknown.
Ah, there is Hell-fire in my blood and bone,
And in their ashes throbs an everlasting pain! "

E'en then the ague in its grip doth hold
His quivering heart while every vein on fire
Doth scorch his brain; fell anguish and desire
Usurp new forms of terror manifold;
He strives to pray to Heaven as of old
But on his faltering tongue the words expire;
The fevered brain doth swarm with phantoms dire
That changing take new shapes as blood runs warm or cold.

" Loud laugh the fiends as on a snowy peak
With stifled breath and frozen limbs I lie;
The ravening wolf's, the famished eagle's cry
Creeps through the flesh and bone they come to seek;
The dripping fang and the devouring beak
Tear out my heart and yet I cannot die!
I curse thee, Death! The fiends stand mocking by
And hound the furious beasts their deadly wrath to wreak! "

" Heaven's Grace descend to flout the powers of Hell! "
Thus prays the priest, " O, come thou in the guise
Of Beauty's presence and Love's healing eyes
And in his heart the Fiend's suggestions quell!
Descend from God and of His goodness tell,
O Faith triumphant, and regild the skies! "
Then in an ecstasy: " Behold! " he cries,
" His wavering soul's redeemed, and with his heart 'tis well! "

* * *

THE fever's fire burnt out, his limbs lie still;
Slowly the clouded mind regains its light,
And every well-known face that meets his sight,
Awakens memory and his heart doth fill
With longings pure, and thus the shades of Ill
With all their phantom-train are put to flight.
And then comes through the stillness of the night
A promise of God's grace, a message of His will.

It was the godly man whose thrilling tone
Fell like glad music on the Prince's ear.
He spake of Heaven's boon; a glistening tear
Hung on the sick man's eyelid; then a moan –
Far-heard and faint—as of a spirit lone
That hovered 'twixt this earth and some bright sphere.
" There's healing in those words—*her* voice I hear –
" It is my Lady's voice—that calls me to Love's throne.

My heart did vow—to do her homage there –
Where high she sits—amidst her knights renowned."
Faint was his voice—a distant hollow sound.
" Ay—on that voyage—did my spirit fare—
But shadows chased—the sunbeams—from the air;
Dark, floating clouds—enveiled the earth around;
The vision fled—the Promised Land unfound
Did mock my sickening heart—till Hope was like Despair."

The priest—no bigot of a barren creed—
Well knew the sick heart's longing, but afraid
To feed it full on flattering hopes, obeyed
A kindly impulse, and thus read his rede:
'Twas not for man to tell what was decreed
In highest heaven till God's will had made
His purpose manifest; he humbly said:
"God's mercy solace hath for man's extremest need."

Thus said the gentle priest full warily;
The knight bewildered peered into his eyes
With questioning gaze and, lost in wild surmise,
Held forth his hands, and to the priest said he:
"I know what is,—but know not what will be
The end on earth of this—my heart's emprise—
I fain would know—though I do well avise
Nor man nor angel's heart may guess high
Heaven's decree!"

The Hand that traced in characters divine
Upon Life's scroll the mystery of Doom,
Shot light through Chaos and primeval gloom
And bade its beams o'er rolling worlds to shine—
That Hand doth lead him to the hallowed shrine
Where Beauty reigneth in eternal bloom.
Lo! even now upon Fate's mystic loom
The sombre shades of Death with Love's bright
beams entwine!

"Son, keep thy faith in Heaven's eternal light,"
So said the clerk, "when shades thy path surround
Heed not the ills that compass thee around,
Look where the lamps of Heaven are burning bright!
Let Faith keep vigil, from their lofty height
The stars shall send their beams to gild the ground.
Yea, steadfast be thy faith till thou hast found
The Dayspring that lies hid within the heart of
Night!

Son, keep thy faith in Love's eternal power
That rules the Universe by God's decree.
'Twill in one breath give heaven and earth to thee
And on thy soul His choicest blessings shower.
This life below is like the passing hour:
'Tis here, 'tis gone; but to the soul that's free
Love gives a foretaste of Eternity,
And Heaven yields its bliss, the soul's celestial
dower."

These soothing words fell on the Prince's ear
As blossoms wafted by a gentle breeze
Fall lightly on the turf when quivering trees
Thrill to the breath of Summer that is near.
They sank into his soul and quelled all fear
And set once more his fevered mind at ease.
All calm, as though his soul had found release,
Low on his couch he lay—that was to be his bier.

But nay, it was not death's unending sleep;
Closed were his eyes as though in death he lay;
But 'fore his curtained gaze what pageants sweep
Of old romance—of love and war's array;
Of warrior-kings and lords and ladies gay;
Of rugged bastion and frowning keep,
And dungeons grim where wretched captives weep,
Whose hearts and eyes entombed pine for the light of day!

The shadow passes from his brow, a light
Steals o'er his softening face, he breathes a sigh
Scarce heard; anon with trembling hands raised high
Yearns for some form that greets his inward sight.
Is it an Angel, or his Lady bright,
For whom he fain would live and fain would die?
Comes she to him from out the Eastern sky?
Comes she to soothe his soul in pity of his plight?

* * *

O SILENT bark upon the moonlit sea!
Art thou not guided by the hand of Fate?
Predestined thus to bear thy mournful freight
Of frustrate hopes to far-off Tripoli?
The winds are hush'd—glide onward silently!
Glide on, for Beauty at the Castle-gate
The coming of her True Knight doth await.
Glide on, thou sacred bark of Love and Destiny!

As night and day with weary pace go by,
Grim at the prow the silent watchmen stand
With heart and eyes that yearn for sight of land,
And oft deceived, some glimmering shore espy
And fondly deem the wished-for land is nigh.
But nay, 'tis ocean wide on either hand.
For many a night and day no welcome strand
Will cheer the drooping heart or greet the weary eye.

At length there gleams afar a radiant shore,
The silvery girdle of some storied isle,
Where Greece and Glory cast a mournful smile,
'Tis not the Greece that in the days of yore
On beauty's brow the crown of wisdom wore,
But Greece whose ashes barbarous hands defile
In desolated fane and tottering pile,
Where heaven-born Pallas' voice, alas! is heard no more.

Past Grecian seas and isles once known to fame,
With oars suspended, slackened sails they sped,
Gazing on scenes where power and grandeur fled
Still linger in the magic of a name
To throw a veil of lustre o'er her shame.
Their spirits hailed, as bowed each reverent head,
The ever-living presence of her dead,
And breathed an air divine that kindled into flame.

Like to a phantom ship the bark doth glide—
Silence within and silence all around.
Hush'd are the winds and waves, hush'd every sound
Save slow and ceaseless murmurs of the tide.
Silent and grim the warriors watch beside
Their hero's couch, who sleeps a sleep profound.
Silent they mourn to think that alien ground
Will in its dust conceal his glory and their pride.

* * *

WHEN closed the outward senses, then the mind
Can dwell on scenes that it can recreate
Within itself, and neither chance nor fate
Can mar the perfect bliss the soul will find.
The Promised Land for which his bosom pined
Now shines around him, and in regal state
She comes to greet him at the Castle-gate;
Loud throbs his sinking heart, with tears his eyes are blind.

He waketh from his trance, for through the dark
Some radiant presence, rather felt than seen,
Draws nigh as moonlight passing through a screen
Of floating clouds. And that soft music—hark!
What strains are those? His spirit's fragile bark
Glides on to measures joyous yet serene—
As floats on rolling waves of light between
The earth and sky at dawn the rapture-breathing lark.

"At last mine eyes behold thee! Though mine eyes
Grow dim apace,—I see thee still the same—
As erstwhile seemed—the vision fair—that came
To soothe—my longing heart—from out the skies.
And true thou art,—no phantom false that flies—
To put the longings—of the heart—to shame.
Thou sayst, 'love's longings are—no empty name,
And dying we shall live—for true love never dies!'"

To eyes that long have waited God hath brought
In her blest form the vision of his breast:
Love, fame and glory in her manifest,
And in her bodied forth the heaven he sought.
Long had he prayed for her but found her not—
And now she comes to end his life-long quest.
His toil is o'er, he goes unto his rest
With mind and heart at ease, and soul with glory fraught.

A sigh perchance for unfulfilled renown—
A tear perchance for love's remembered name—
Ay, these and more;—be thine a hero's fame,
Be thine the glory of a martyr's crown!
What though thy light like yonder sun's go down
In seas unknown to hide its deathless flame,
Heedless like him of mankind's praise or blame,
Heedless like him, go thou, of Fortune's smile or frown!
Though bright and brief like his thy course is run,
Pure soul, where shades of night now gather fast,
O, look beyond—there lies a region vast
Where Night is not, and Day is never done!
Sleep thou to wake above; life hath begun,
Which shall redeem the promise of the past.
Beauty and Truth thine earthly days outlast,
And Peace and Bliss are thine, from Death's dominion won!

Go forth, glad soul, where He thy course will guide;
Go forth rejoicing in God's universe,
Where flaming constellations intersperse
The azure vault of heaven boundless-wide!
Float in the ethereal spaces that divide
A myriad worlds whose rolling orbs rehearse
Their God-appointed task in ways diverse
For ends whose knowledge is to human hearts denied.

Go where His mercy will no more withhold
The secret of man's being from thy gaze!
He will not let thee wander in a maze
While o'er His worlds have countless æons rolled.
Beauty thou'lt find mid wonders manifold,
And Love that breathes through Heaven's mysterious ways.
These are for thee; with Angels shalt thou praise
God's gifts more precious far than orient pearls and gold!

* * *

THUS ends his quest upon Life's weary way;
Unto the Castle-gate they bear the Knight,
Not as one dead, but clad in raiment bright
As though awhile in peaceful sleep he lay.
She greets him fair, and deems his life's bright day
Will never close in Death's perpetual night.
Gazing, her bosom glows; a strange delight
As of some blissful dream her trembling soul doth
sway.

The golden waves are purpling in the West,
Slow sinks beyond their bourne the orb of day;
Soft through an open casement glides a ray
To rouse the princely warrior from his rest.
Beside him lie his helm and plumèd crest,
And shield and sword—bright as in war's array.
Faith lights his brow, for still his soul doth pray
To Him whose Grace Divine hath sanctified his
Quest.

As brave in life, so calm in death lies he;
She clasps his cold white hands, and bending o'er
Would touch his marble brow. 'Tis cold: no more,
Shall throb his pulse with love's wild ecstasy.
Far is her gaze—across a boundless sea;
For now she stands on Life's receding shore,—
All earth behind, all Heaven lies before;
And in her longing gaze is Love's eternity.

"O Grieve not, Lady, for thy warrior dead
Where low he lies upon his lonely bier,"
So spake the gentle priest, "nor let one tear
Upon that pale unlaurelled brow be shed!
From prison-bars his wingéd soul hath fled.
To find a dwelling in some starry sphere.
But love still binds her wings, she hovers here
Upon this earth awhile round thy belovéd head.

In Death we waken to Reality,
And Error's myriad phantoms fly before
Truth which the veil of thought can hide no more.
Desires and passions too like shadows flee;
Time, space and circumstance all cease to be.
Life's dreams thus past, and all its travails o'er,
The pure-eyed soul regains the destined shore
And stands, O Power benign, before Love's throne and Thee!"

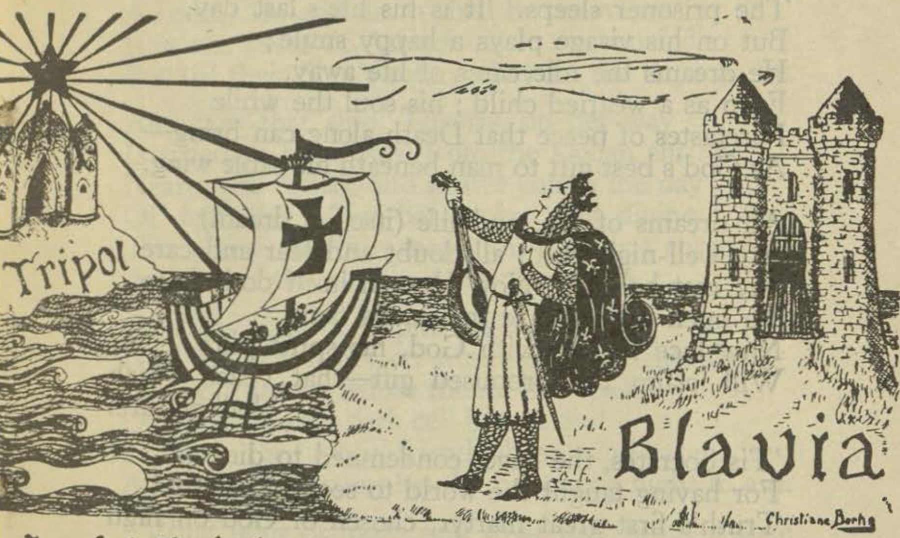
Then quoth an aged knight: "When years have flown,
When 'neath the turf our mould'ring bones shall lie,
On wings of Memory your fame shall fly
From age to age o'er regions yet unknown.
'Twill guide true hearts to Love's eternal throne
Through steadfast faith and hope that cannot die.
On Beauty's brow shall Valour's heart descry
Light of the smile of God—revealed by Love alone.

Such fame doth live—'tis Immortality!
Thus will your love, in others' love renewed,
Reach undiscovered climes and nations rude,
Expanding Life into Eternity!
Yea, as it now hath been, so shall it be:
Despair by hope, and pain by bliss subdued,
The heart of Love with patient faith imbued,
Shall win o'er Death itself the final victory!"

Silent she stands, but drops no woman's tear
From eyes that burn. The pent heart heaves no sigh;
A voiceless prayer mounts up to God on high,
And peace descends with faith that knows no fear.
What though his life hath fled, he seemeth near—
For deep within her heart his soul doth lie;
As erst in life his love will hover nigh
To waft her pray'rs to heaven, her lingering days to cheer.

By love sustained, with faith and patience blest,
In cloistered peace she dwelt awhile on earth,
Where of celestial joys she found no dearth,—
For Heaven lay enshrined within her breast,
As did her holy thoughts and deeds attest.
And when Death came with promise of rebirth
To Higher Life, the meed of saintly worth,
Her spirit soared aloft—a bird unto its nest!

* * *



Jaufré Rudel . troubadour. Prince de Blaye
1148 + HVITIEME CENTENAIRE + 1948

The Death of Socrates

'TIS not yet morn; the town is wrapt in gloom.
  A dim light flickers in a prisoner's cell
Filled with the shadow of impending doom.
A friend is there to save—or bid farewell
To one whose soul, he deems, must soon take flight
From Athens and this world unto the realms of night.

The prisoner sleeps. It is his life's last day,
But on his visage plays a happy smile;
He dreams the idle cares of life away,
Even as a wearied child; his soul the while
Foretastes of peace that Death alone can bring—
As God's best gift to man beneath his sable wing.

All dreams of life, and life (itself a dream)
Are well-nigh past; all doubt and fear and care
Are cast behind. Now Heaven itself doth seem
To open on his gaze in visions fair;
Now face to face with God, his spirit pure
Will claim the promised gift—that Peace which shall endure.

'Tis Socrates, the Sage, condemned to die—
For having taught the world to seek for Truth!
Truth's first great martyr, chosen of God on high
To hold the torch to nations, and to smooth
The path of wisdom that the soul might be
Assured, by reasoning Faith, of Immortality.

'Tis Socrates, the wisest man in Greece,
As once the Delphic Oracle foretold.
Wisest of men, for he did never cease
To pray to God for wisdom, never bold
To claim it as his own. He saw the light,
The far-off light of Truth that pierced through Error's night.

ERE in the East the Star of Morn* arose,
Whose beams refulgent gilded all the earth,
His spirit saw the inner light that glows
Within the heart of man, where Faith has birth.
He knew it came from God and needs must be
The spark of life divine that lights Eternity.

And must he die for this? Athens has said:
"He worships not our Gods but boasts some creed
That has the allegiance of our youth betrayed;
A traitor he, and death shall be the meed."
It is the voice of Athens.......he must die!
But till their Ship's return they let the days go by.

And now that ship, Theoris, on her way
Is speeding homeward from the Delian shrine;
Nearer she comes, and nearer comes the day
Of death no longer barred by rites divine.
The votive offerings made, the ship has come
And heads the marble steep of Sunium.

Of thirty days of respite 'tis the last,
And dawn is near; on wings the moments fly,
And so must be before the morn is past—
Or linger in that dark cell but to die!
So thinks the faithful friend whose mind has made
A daring desperate plan the prisoner's flight to aid.

"What hour of morn, and what hath brought thee here
Despite the jealous watch and portals barred?"
"'Tis not yet dawn" says Crito, "but 'tis near.
The gate was opened by the friendly guard
For me, a friend. I've come to bid thee fly

Before the light of dawn o'erspreads the Eastern sky.
That ship of doom full soon will gain the strand
And then—ah! then, O Gods! thou hast to die.

* Jesus Christ.

Such is the Athenian people's dread command,
And it must be fulfilled. Nay, thou must fly
From here to other regions where thy life
And honour may be safe from hatred, harm and
strife.

I came to bid thee fly—I watched thy sleep.
Godlike that calm on which I could but gaze....
Godlike that smile. My heart did cease to weep—
I stood entranced. Lost in a wild amaze,
My errand was forgot; I marvelled how
Thy spirit so serene, so radiant was thy brow."

"O gentle friend!" the Master, smiling, said
What is the end of life on earth but death?
Long have I lived—behold this hoary head!
Must I now fear to lose a little breath?
Nay, so the Gods have willed and I must die.
Is death the end of life? Nay, 'tis the life on high!

Even now ere I awoke I had a dream,
A glad prevision of the life to be:
A beauteous form arrayed in light did seem
To guide me o'er the plains of Thessaly,
Where blossomed gardens, spreading mile on mile,
All owned the Sun-God's sway and basked beneath
his mile."

"Auspicious omen! 'Tis the Gods' behest!
That dream has come from out the gate of horn!
The breath of God is stirring in thy breast,
Who will not leave thee here to die forlorn.
The Gods, thy friends, and time and chance unite
To compass thine escape and guard thee in thy
flight."

"The Gods, O Crito! will no wrong condone,
That we commit. What though we suffer wrong?
Justice is theirs, and vengeance they disown
Those who are patient cannot suffer long.

Let me be just to those who are unjust,
Strong in my sense of right, unshaken in my trust.

What though the Athenian people sought my life
Unjustly? Must I not obey the Laws?
What though unwisdom, envy, hate be rife
In Athens, must I not uphold her cause?
Land of my birth and choice she must remain;
I'll wrong her not for wrongs which men, not Laws, ordain.
Say, have I lived a coward's life of shame,
That reason scorns and conscience must despise?
Have I not lived false men's untruth to blame,
And vain pretence, the fountain of all lies;
To follow virtue in the wake of Truth;
To rouse to ardent quest the eager heart of youth?

Some secret essence in our being lies
Untouched by this frail body's weal or woe.
It lives by justice, by injustice dies;
By truth and right alone 'twill thrive and grow
To its full measure. Falsehood, malice, hate,
And every wanton wrong its vital force abate.

It makes us like unto the Gods on high,
It gives us mastery o'er the might of Fate.
To harm that sacred essence is to die
Before the body dies, its mortal mate.
Say, wouldst thou have me kill my Soul to save
This life which soon or late must find the destined grave?"
"But think, O think of those thou'lt leave behind:
Thy children, unprotected and forlorn,
Left by their father to a fate unkind,
To curse the day that ever they were born.
Wouldst thou choose this, O thou whose chiefest praise
Is to have followed Truth and lived in Virtue's ways?"

" For three score years and ten my sojourn here
Has brought me nearer to my journey's end ;
Then why delay, were it a day, a year?
The Gods alone my children will befriend
Whene'er I die. Their bounty doth provide
For every life its share throughout their regions wide.
The Laws are sacred guardians of the State;
With them I made a solemn pact to bide
In Athens 'neath their sway, and to await
Their mandate in all things, whate'er betide.
There stand the Laws my conduct to arraign
Should I their trust betray a respite brief to gain.

For Truth I've lived, and laboured to proclaim
That life is Truth immutable, and now
To turn and fly! Would it not brand with shame
My recreant soul as it would tinge my brow?
Thus would my life become a monstrous lie—
Past, present, future, all. Nay, it is best to die."

O Death! where are thy terrors when man's heart,
Made strong by faith, can rise to claim from thee
Its highest good? All shadowy phantoms part,
And thou standst forth as Immortality!
What visions bringst thou to the sage's mind,
That bid him ne'er regret the scenes he leaves behind!

Life's sombre veil uplifted by thy hand
Reveals new forms of Beauty to his eye:
Unfading blossoms in a fairer land,
Unfading star-beams in a purer sky,
Serener ether where the Soul shall be
Lapped in abiding joys, from sordid passions free!

The hour is drawing nigh, the sun's glad beams
Are messengers of love and grace to him.
He glides from happy dreams to happier dreams;

But friendly eyes with brimming tears are dim.
The Laws' stern ministers the chains unbind,
That in ignoble bonds his aged limbs confined.

His visage beams as with a holy joy:
Reviewing life's beginning and its end,
No dread forebodings, doubts, or fears destroy
The rising hopes that faith and conscience lend.
All unperturbed his heart, his soul serene,
He hails what is to come from out of what has been.

" Pleasure ", says he, " and Pain in harmony
Are wisely blent in Nature's subtle plan;
The Powers that teach man's spirit to be free
Ordain them but to try the heart of man.
My chains removed, a soothing touch I feel
Where late my skin was bruised by these hard links of steel.
Not here our whole of life, a region vast.
Beyond immediate sense, lies spread before;
The future holds the present and the past
In happier climes beyond the Stygian shore.
There, living souls, not shadowy forms, we'll bide
When we have passed unscathed that river's gloomy tide.
I hasten to that land....my chains lie here,
A happy symbol of my swift release!
All that was dark is passing, light draws near,
And all around is harmony and peace.
Music as yet unheard, I *feel around,*.....
It comes on joyous waves that seek to burst in sound!
Strange was the counsel which the Gods did send
To me in dreams—that Music I pursue.
I marvelled oft at this, but now I bend
With pious ardour to this service new.
No poet I, yet I must needs essay
The poet's art and, thus, the gracious Gods obey.

Wisdom is perfect music, so I thought
Through all my years, and wisdom's light alone,
And wisdom's voice in all my quests I sought.
But now to seek some music erst unknown
The Gods command me. To their will I bow
And to Immortal Music consecrate my vow!

Ay, thus perchance the inner ear may gain
A foretaste of the Harmony divine
Pervading Kosmos and the starry plane
Where sphered lights make music as they shine.
Life, light and music blent in one may be
What I as wisdom sought—the Perfect Harmony.

Divining her own end, the dying swan,
Touched by the Sun God's breath, bursts into song;
No mournful dirge but joyous pæans drawn
From heart of hope her passing hour prolong.
'Tis music from the Gods to whom I fly.....
I go to dwell with *Them*, and there I cannot die!"

Friends and disciples round him—each fond heart,
Now torn with anguish, now with joy elate,
He sat discoursing on the immortal part
Of life that lies beyond the reach of Fate.
Serene and brave, no fear and no desire,
His words console their hearts, and faith and hope inspire.

The jailer comes, there's trouble in his face:
"The hemlock will not act if you excite
Your nerves with talk; I pray you, rest a space,"
His eyes illumined with a strange delight,
Calmly the Sage rejoins "I rest not *here*.
Prepare a double draught—and, friend, thou need'st not fear!"

A hush falls on the listeners like a pall,
And day seems night to them, till once again

A voice from fields Elysian doth recall
Hope to their hearts with all its pleasing train;
A soothing voice whose tones are winged with Light;
They float, like silvery clouds, across the brow of night;

Higher and higher from life's common round,
High o'er the earth their widening circles soar;
No pause until the land of Peace is found—
The Spirit's home upon an unseen shore.
"There, in God's presence, chastened spirits dwell
Blest with Eternal Life—and there's my home. Farewell!"

Reclining on the couch, his heart at ease,
Smiling and calm he drains the fatal bowl.
Slowly he feels a creeping numbness seize
On all his limbs; at last the thronéd soul
Springs from the ruins, shakes her wings for flight,
And sails away, released, unto the realms of Light.

Diogenes

FOOL! what's thy body's life on earth but waste
Of purer being? What but toil and strife
To feed and clothe a carcase that is placed
Beside the yawning grave 'twixt death and life?

What is thy spirit's task if not to scorn
This filthy tenement of flesh and blood?
Ay, spurn it here, that thou mayst be reborn
Into the Life which like yon sunlight's flood

Flows from some source unknown. It circles round
The universe of Being, never still
But in perpetual movement; knows no bound
But of its own supreme creative will.

Out, out of this vile trunk of skin and bone,
My soul unstained! Take wings that thou mayst soar
Away into the Unknown. Why fret and groan
To see this sordid world's increasing store

Of toys and baubles that can only please
Children and fools—ay, only to destroy
What little soul they have. O fly from these;
To loath them, not to have them, is true joy.

To loath the world, to loath man's wretched life—
This festering, rank corruption gilded o'er;
This puppet-show of kings and slaves whose strife,
Like growling dogs' for bones, is waxing sore.

Enough for us this throne—this royal tub.
We watch life's paltry pageant day by day;
And thus it chanced we saw that lion-cub
Of Macedon with all his war array.

AY, he was passing then the world to take!
He saw our little world and, drawing nigh,
Stood gazing here, where for this body's sake
It is my wont in the Sun's rays to lie.

And he to Corinth as a conqueror came,
Who could not conquer self! Ay, there stood he
And shouted 'Alexander is my name;
Say, is there aught that I can do for thee?'

'And my name' said I 'is Diogenes.
If thou wouldst do me service, move aside
A little—thus—that I may at my ease
Bask in the light the bounteous Gods provide.'

He stared, and went his way. They say he's gone
To win the world. A sorry world at best!
On both the all-beholding Sun has shone—
His world, my tub. Which is the sorrier jest?

Thou all-beholding Sun, dost thou behold
The Conqueror's talons smeared with human gore?
The Furies raging wide for blood and gold—
Glutted with these, yet ravening for more?

What Kingdoms fall, what Satrapies arise
If but the Conqueror nod! Olympios' son,
Jove-born, will claim dominion of the skies!
Woe worth the day! When earth and skies are won

Grim Orcus will claim him. See, where he lies!
O demi-god and hero bred in crime!
Thy warriors wait; wilt thou unclose thine eyes—
New worlds to conquer in the Stygian clime?

Alexander the Great in Persia

HE came—a hero or a god;
Saw Persia's might to ruin hurled,
Gazed round the field his phalanx trod,
And " Mine, he cried, a vanquished world
All lands whereon the sun doth shine,
To Asia's farthest bournes are mine!

Fate fans to flame by night and day
The Olympian fire within my breast.
Inheritor of god-like sway,
My hand shall link the East and West.
The rising and the setting sun
Shall mark the bounds of Empire won.

When Xerxes with his countless host
The patriot heart of Greece defied,
His was a tyrant's idle boast,
For Greece hurled back the invading tide
And raised o'er baffled Persia's shame
A monument of deathless fame.

And now to me the Gods accord,
With bleeding Persia at my feet,
A conqueror's might, a conqueror's sword
To bid all earth-born monarchs greet,
When Victory waves her purple wings,
Their conqueror as the king of kings.

My sword whose flash is victory,
Lo! It hath dazed the Persian's eyes.
All vain his pomp of chivalry,
Trembling for life Darius flies....
Forsaking on the battle plain
His queen, his treasures, and his train!

Great Zeus! who from Olympus' height
Survey'st thy limitless domain,
From thee I claim thy heaven-born might
As presage of imperial reign,
And for my conquering sword alone
Proud Persia's sceptre, crown and throne.

Nay, more than Persia's wide domain, . . .
From where the Nile's slow waters glide
To where upon his torrid plain
The broad-browed Indus rolls his tide,
Make all lands mine, their ancient fame
Lost in the glory of my name!

And me, supreme in triumph's hour,
Alike let East and West obey.
Thus grant unto thy son the power
The destinies of worlds to sway,
Till all men hail in war and peace
The star of life that rose in Greece!"

At the Tomb of Aurangzebe

SLEEP thou in peace, long years of trial o'er!
What clouds of darkness hid thy setting sun!
How soon thine Empire vanished! Nevermore
By son of thine was glory to be won.
The last great monarch thou of Baber's line,
And thine the heritage of Akber's fame;
If great thy virtues, greater sins were thine
And left a stain upon an honoured name.

Though bigot zeal condone thy faults and raise
Its voice to call thy piety sublime,
It is not for my faltering tongue to praise
The greatness born of piety and crime.
I mark the steps which raised thee to the throne:
Thy brothers' lives by guileful force betrayed;
Thine aged parent left to pine alone,
A king discrowned, by thee a captive made!

A cruel pious heart subdued to crime—
May mercy's breath its darkest deeds efface!
I hear soft Pity's voice cry out to Time:
"O hide his sins but not his deeds of grace!"
Time's verdict stands: He lost great Akber's throne.
But bitter, far more bitter is the shame
To think that petty chieftains should disown
The might and glory of the Moghul name!

Yet, such was Fate's decree; thou wast a straw
Cast on the winds; thy sceptre and thy sword,
Mere playthings of a stern relentless law,
Did pierce the side of their victorious lord!
Ay, He who gave thee power ordained thy fate;
He gave thee power and prolonged thy life
To teach thy soul its sins to expiate,
To tame ambition's rage with bitter strife.

A hermit's heart beneath a monarch's pride,
To thee a Jesuit's piety was given
From blood-stained earth thy wandering steps to guide
To regions that revealed a glimpse of heaven.
Thy heart borne down by years of toilsome care,
Thy palsied hands too feeble to control
The tide of time, and gnawing griefs thy share,—
Peace was the craving of thy wearied soul.

And death brought peace as Nature's promised boon—
To thee a boon long promised, long denied.
The tardy years were gone,—they brought full soon
The moment and the doom which will abide.
Sleep thou in peace upon this lonely hill,
Which overlooks the sad and silent scene
Where once thine armies lay. All, all is still—
The strife for power, the struggle that has been.

Not far from thee his* holier relics lie,
Who found an empire greater than was thine—
God's kingdom wider than all earth and sky,
Where honours are, not royal, but divine.
He taught thee earthly kingship to disown,
And follow where his trembling footsteps trod ;
He bade thee disavow a monarch's throne
And rise with him to seek the throne of God.

Taught thee by humble labour to repent,
Taught thee, a king, to earn thy daily bread ;
To keep by stern repentance lowly bent
Through night and day a monarch's haughty head.
'Twas thus he taught thee expiate thy crime ;
With saving mercy retribution came ;
Thy spirit passed beyond the bournes of time
And soared beyond all human praise and blame.

---

* The Saint whom the Emperor held in reverence.

Sleep now in peace ; thine empire is the grave,
From which thou still dost wield a sovereign's
power ;
And from it rise proud visions still to save
Our pensive hearts in a despondent hour.
The proudest empire fades into a name
When Time has swept away the shifting scene ;
Three words contain the record of its fame
While human hearts remember " It has been. "

Golconda at Sunset

A SHADOW of the wings of night
Creeps westward o'er the horizon's bar,
Where through the greying mist of light
Now faintly gleams the Evening Star.

There brooding fame her vigil keeps
O'er grim Golconda's castled height,
O'er domes in whose dark silence sleeps
The glory of her men of might;

O'er scenes where, with expiring breath,
Faith hallowed the unnatural strife,
And wrested from the hands of Death
Its guerdon of immortal life.

The setting sun before he sets,
Long lingering casts his flickering ray
On towers and mosques and minarets
Robed in Time's holy garb of grey.

Bereft of power though not of fame,
Custodians of the Past, they stand
In mournful grandeur yet to claim
Dominion o'er the subject land.

Yon fortress rears its dragon crest
To triumph o'er its foes—in vain;
In vain its coils of ramparts breast
The circling hills and swelling plain.

Ah! what avails th' embrasured tower,
Or what the bastion-girded wall
When God annuls a monarch's power
And Fate ordains a kingdom's fall?

All vain his warriors' steel-fenced ring,
In vain their swords and bucklers shine;
He falls, Golconda's fated king,
The last, the gentlest of his line.

Not his the heart, nor his the hand
From death a hero's meed to gain;
An exile from his native land,
He drags unseen a captive's chain.

The years roll on; his hapless lot
Let not the pensive Muse bemoan.
He sleeps, by all save Heaven forgot.
He sleeps in alien earth unknown.

But mark! the years that roll away
Bring vengeance on the wings of Time;
The victor lives to rue the day
That made his victory a crime.

He lives to learn that Fate decreed
In conquered kingdoms' doom his own;
No vassal monarch at his need
Comes to support his tottering throne.

The Southern Kingdoms are no more,
Whose loyal valour yet might save.
Treason behind and foes before,
He sighs for peace—and for the grave.

Life darkens, power and glory fade—
But will not Heaven the doom defer?
The hour has struck, the grave is made,
That marks an Empire's sepulchre!

Napoleon on the Voyage to Egypt—1798

THE winds were still, the stars of night
Shone o'er the Southern main,
Where Europe's future conqueror sailed
With his embattled train.

Warships in squadrons ranged around,
The Orient rode between.
The heavens with their myriad eyes
Looked down upon the scene.

The Chieftain's mind, in pride of power,
A moment's space did glance
Upon his warriors' panoply,
Bright sword and shining lance.

Then Destiny in grandeur rose
Before Ambition's eyes,
And offered to the hand of might
The whole world for a prize!

It was the hour when Nature breathes
Her silent prayer of peace,
And peace like Heaven's grace descends
To bid vain passions cease—

A sacred moment when the heart
Forgoes all selfish care
And each pure impulse of the soul
Becomes a voiceless prayer.

He gazed upon the skies serene
Till o'er his spirit came
That holy awe that bids us own
The nothingness of fame.

How vain they seemed, the pomp and pride
Of sceptre and of throne,.
Since glory, might and majesty
Belong to God alone!

To Him Who made those shining worlds,
Who makes suns set and rise,
Whose Empire is the Universe,
Whose jewelled throne the skies—

To Him the hero's soul, subdued,
Its secret thoughts addrest,
While in a dream he saw himself
Lord of the East and West.

Grave men of science by his side,
Well skilled in Nature's lore,
They too had fixed their gaze on high
The heavens to explore;

And when they marked his pensive mood
And caught his questioning eye,
Each from his garnered wisdom sought
To frame a meet reply.

Expounding Nature's mysteries,
Creation's subtle laws,
They showed him as the source of Life—
A lifeless Primal Cause;

How self-evolved and self-sustained
The eternal systems roll;
How Nature moves—a vast machine,
All body and no soul.

Flashed on that brow of classic mould,
Pale, placid, though care-worn—
That brow as of a sculptured god,
A lightning smile of scorn.

Then in a measured tone his lips
These meaning words let fall:
" Messieurs! 'Tis well, what ye have said;
But say, Who made it all?"

Lieutenant Buonaparte
or
The Hand of Fate

A HUNGRY scholar, young but lean and gaunt,
Feeding his restless soul on mighty deeds,
Dreaming of worlds to conquer! Lone he sits
In his bare room, so spectre-like and pale;
Unfed, unclad, yet mastering his needs.
Cheerless the room, but there are books and thoughts
Better than food and raiment. Lone he sits—
Now fire, now gloom. One moment life doth seem
All darkness and despair—prefiguring death;
Anon it flashes forth a raging flame
Whose flitting sparks would singe a hundred worlds.
A scholar—or a soldier—or a Titan;
Alone, self-armoured, foraging the past.
See! From the past (not dead to him) step forth
Captains and heroes—kings and conquerors:
Young Alexander, Cæsar, Hannibal
And all the mightiest of Plutarch's men—
Who hail him as their peer born out of time,
And come to lay their trophies at his feet
And crown his pallid brow with triple wreath!
Ah! dreams, vain dreams, why mock his soul?..Away!
Black, black the present gloom...and then a blaze.
O star! so like the sun, where wilt thou lead?
Whence comest thou to light his world of gloom?
"No greatness in these days...no deeds of might.
All, all is petty. I will show them how..."
But how, and what, and when? Delusion all!

He ponders—dreams again—all Europe lies
Spread out before him : mountains, rivers, plains
And royal cities like a coloured map.
That map—it moves and changes....arméd hosts,
Millions on millions sweep across its face,
O'erleaping streams and mountain-barriers!
Prophetic vision, or fantastic dream?

He gazes into space...high overhead
A shadowy crown that ever onward moves—
A crown of many crowns—a crown of stars!
Unfed, unclad! What then? This iron frame,
Small, spare and thoughtfed hath but little need
Of food and raiment. Soon the time will come—
When crowns and kingdoms come—the time to eat.
Lo! kingdoms come, and crowns....'mid regal pomp
He sits high-placed with emperors and kings—
To feast on more than food. The time has come!

HARK to the cannons' roar, the thunderous crash
Of mighty squadrons rushing to their doom!
A hundred battlefields flash red before him....
Those deep grey eyes are steadfast in their gaze,
That slow calm pulse is even. Victory!
Another, and another, and another ....
The hunger of the heart unsated still!
First Italy, then Egypt....Britain next.
The Titan's thirst would drain the ocean-cup....
But there is poison there. O hateful pause!
Now turn again and overleap the Alps....
Marengo, Jena, Friedland, Austerlitz!
What names are these? They fill the world with sound
Re-echoing down the ages; sounds of doom!
All Europe's at his feet....roll up that map! *

---

* The words of the dying Pitt.

Roll up that map of Europe, 'tis grown old.
Shape Europe all anew—there will be time
For making maps again. Now roll it up!
Eastward he glances.... Oh! how near..how far!

O East, thy magic name—thy magic spell....
Or glory or destruction. Be it so!
The Eagle that would reach the rising Sun
Must dare to fly beyond the Russian snows,
Scorn famine, desolation and despair
Until he gains his eyry in the sun.
On, onward still! It is the call of Fate!

Around earth's ocean-belt a glance he flings....
Ah whither now, O Star of Destiny?
Far in the watery waste his eye discerns
A faint, dark speck....an isle—St. Helena!
His tablet lies before him—on its page
Fate's hand, not his, these bodeful words inscribes:
" St. Helena, an island in the Atlantic—
British possession."

There his Star of Glory
Sinks like the sun beyond the western wave.
Receive, O desolate isle! thy crown of pride,
Low lying at thy captive-conqueror's feet.
See him, a rock-chained Promethéus, stand
Fate-fixed—above all grandeur, glory, fame!

Napoleon's Death-bed Soliloquy

ENGLAND! I thank thee, for thy hand has placed
The martyr's crown of glory on my brow,
Holier than fame and prouder than the wreaths
Of all my victories. This sea-girt rock,
Thy sacrificial altar, is my throne,
From whence I gaze on immortality.
Thine is the might, O England! that has raised
Me Promethéus-like to that calm height
Where mortal will has power to conquer Fate.
A nobler triumph this than e'er was mine
When o'er the Alps my conquering eagles flew
To hail me Europe's lord. For then my gaze
Was fixed upon the known world's utmost bounds—
Beyond the range of Alexander's dream,
Or aught that Cæsar saw. 'Tis loftier now.
With Europe at my feet, the rising sun
Still lured me to his cradle in the East,
And East and West and North and South became
My world—an Empire—an embodied dream!
Greatly I dared to make that dream come true,
And broke the tyrant power of ancient thrones
That stood along my path to victory.
Fate lured me on, and whereso'er I went
France and her legions saw above my head
The star of faith and power, and called it Glory.
That star—for me the Star of Destiny—
Still shone before me from some unseen heaven
Through blood and fire and clouds of mortal ills,
Through all the chaos of a world at strife,
Through all the splendour of my fame and power,
And through Illusion's veil of mystery.
Greatly I dared, and fought and won....and fell—
As falls the setting sun 'mid crimson clouds

Into the bosom of Infinity—
And there mine Empire lies!
Thy hand, which seemed to vanquish has upraised
My power to heights beyond the reach of fame,
Where glory fades and war's victorious laurels
Are but as withered leaves. Not as the man
Who would bestride the earth, but mightier still,
Like him who erst Jove's thunderbolt defied,
Seeking the good of man—me hast thou throned
Upon the Rock of Ages, me hast thou,
Subservient to my star, made half divine!
Ay, more than man, new-born of earth and heaven
I stand before the gaze of all mankind.
And skies above and ocean all around
Now make this sacred peak an Empire's throne....
Which neither hand of man nor breath of Time
Can wreck or change. No conqueror ever stood
So high as here I stand, no monarch's brow
Did wear a crown like mine—of stars and thorns!
I will not curse thee, England, though my tongue
Turn into bitter words my stifled groans.
Mine is the heart of sacrifice, not hate....
It brought me to thy hearth a trustful foe,......
Be mine the suffering of which peace is born!
That peace which I have sought through fire and blood
To crown the world withal, it crowns *me* now,
And shines the fairest star among the stars.
I thank thee, England, for this gift is thine!

Napoleon's Name—The Moral

VICTIM of Fate, though Fortune's favoured child;
By Glory crowned, by Destiny beguiled!
A self-willed soul a willing heart enthralled,
Ambition lured where Fame and Glory called.

In thee a miracle did heaven design:
A meteor's flight, a meteor's fall was thine!
How could thy will avert the destined fate,
Or aught of that o'erpowering might abate?

'Twas stamped upon the Eternal Rolls of Heaven,
And not a glimpse to mortal eye was given
Till forth it flashed in flame from Moscow's walls
To show the world how a Napoleon falls!

By faith alone man wins that high estate
Which is of God, for He alone is great.
And this too late thy soaring spirit learned,
When freed of self unto her God she turned.

Thy conquered realm, a speck, she left behind
And higher rose God's boundless realm to find,
Bequeathing to the world a deathless name
To shine for ages from the brow of fame.

O captive Conqueror, doomed to rise no more,
Yet, by self-conquest greater than before!
Thy name and fame the Eternal tale relate:
The will of God, the mystery of fate!

Conquerors

IS THERE not One whose sleepless eye surveys
Men's deeds in every age and every clime,
That o'er life's flowing tide their heads upraise—
The glorious and the monstrous births of Time?

Ask if He would the well-earned meed accord,
Of deathless infamy, or deathless fame
To those whose guilty hands unsheath the sword,
Unloose the fiends of famine and of flame.

First-born of Fame, Emathia's warrior-king*
Represt ambition's bitter tear-drops sheds,
Sighs for more worlds when 'conquest's crimson wing'
From trodden Greece to farthest India spreads.

O Babylon, thou seat of mighty kings!
Where is that spot within thine ancient breast
Where this proud heart that from the Olympian springs,
May find a little earth in which to rest?

The scourge of mankind, Chengiz and Taimur,
Those stormy vultures of the Asian waste,
Who preyed on man, what did their souls endure?
The pangs of hell before death's bitter taste?

What was their glory? Nought but to destroy
What God had made, to feast on human blood,
Raise towers of human skulls with fiendish joy,
And drown the earth in a disastrous flood.

And where are they—and what are they? A name
That fills the heart with horror like a curse.
Such conquerors as those, their glory, fame—
Are they not stains upon God's Universe?

---

* Alexander the Great died at Babylon of a fever at the age of 34.

Now turn thy gaze tow'rd Helen's dreary Isle;
See in his cage the Gallian Eagle* pine
And dig his beak into his bosom while
His heart-blood, oozing, mingles with the brine!

The greatest, not the worst, he owned at last
That peace is surest conquest; and he sighed
Gazing upon the ruins of the past
When time and death the conqueror's power defied.

Say, what are conqueror's glory, monarch's power
If they disdain the good of humankind?
See them awhile a lofty skull-built tower—
And then as ashes scattered by the wind!

*Napoleon.

Dream Pictures

HOW oft the Past returns and we behold
The pageant of the ages that have been!
They come, those heroes of the days of old,
The mightiest the world has ever seen.
Sage, poet, prophet, saviours of mankind,
Warriors and kings who could destroy—or save;
Who broke the chain for body and for mind,
Or forged new chains man's spirit to enslave.

We see them all, pursuing each his toil
Through good and ill to gain the heart's desire.
We see the sword 'mid terror and turmoil;
We hear the heart-tones of the human lyre!
Dream-pictures? Ay, but they will never fade
From off Life's canvas where they've ever been.
They stand, will stand where forms once seen are made
To live for ever in some form unseen!

Pro Rege et Patria

The King is dead. Long Live the Queen!

(1953)

BRITANNIA IMPERATRIX

In Memoriam

H. M. KING GEORGE VI

TIME changes all but truth, which baffles time
And God ordains that truth shall ever live,
A while obscured, yet pure as in her prime—
Purer than aught that life can ever give.

Thy greatness, born of truth, He bids outlast
All outward glory, and all pomp of power.
'Tis He whose grace did glorify thy past,
'Tis He who bade that greatness be thy dower.

Thy noble King, whose short-lived reign is o'er,
Has gone from thee, with his great sires to rest,
And left to be remembered evermore,
A name enshrined within a nation's breast.

Worthy of thee his spirit sought to be,
By self-devotion, higher still to rise.
Called to the throne by fate, he gave to thee
A heart of love and faith, life's noblest prize.

Canst thou forego the glory that has been,
The honour that lent lustre to thy fame?
And shall surrender of an Empire mean
Surrender of a consecrated name?

Thou home of Freedom, ocean-guarded Isle,
Time-honoured name! All hearts now grieve for thee.
Let no delusions* vain thy heart beguile;
Thou still art great and must not cease to be

Great in thy pride of place,—thy head raised high,
Thy gaze fixt on the sun, thy heart serene,
Jove's thunder thine, this lightning in thine eye—
To guard the world, of land and ocean Queen!

* False Socialism.

Regina Cordium

ELIZABETH! A name that shines afar,
From out of old to ages yet to be;
A steadfast light that falls on land and sea—
The Star of Eve relumed as Morning Star!
Symbol of power where Faith and Honour are
A Nation's source of pride by Heaven's decree.
O may no breath obscure their purity,
May no eclipse their pristine glory mar!

So prays, with failing breath, at close of life,
A loyal liegeman of your Grandsire's time,
To whom his faith is as a holy vow:
God guard your ancient realm from Nations' strife,
And be it yours to hail on England's brow,
Undimmed by age, the Splendour of her prime!

Flower of Spring

ELIZABETH, fair flower of Spring,
Lovely daughter of England's King,
Inherits Sceptre, Crown and Ring;

Zones South and East with Western light,
And with St. George's mystic Might
Born of his conquering love of Right.

Elizabeth, an honoured name
That bodies forth her high-born claim,
Honour and Greatness, Power and Fame.

---

* This is an acrostic.—*Ed.*

ENGLAND

A Memory

ENGLAND! What though 'twixt thee and me
The skies extend, the oceans roll,
And thou art but a memory,
The thought of thee can cheer my soul.

In youth, when first I turned my gaze
To see afar thy glories shine,
My wonder was a voiceless praise
Of all the grandeur that was thine.

To me thy greatness was thy fame,
Thou great in war, and great in peace!
And dearer was thine honoured name
Than that of Rome, and that of Greece.

When Shakespeare bade thy heroes live
Their deathless lives, I learnt to know
Thy sons whose hearts and hands could give
The weighty word, the mighty blow.

I saw the proud Plantagenet
With pluméd crest and blazoned shield
Where France and England's champions met—
On Agincourt's, or Crecy's field.

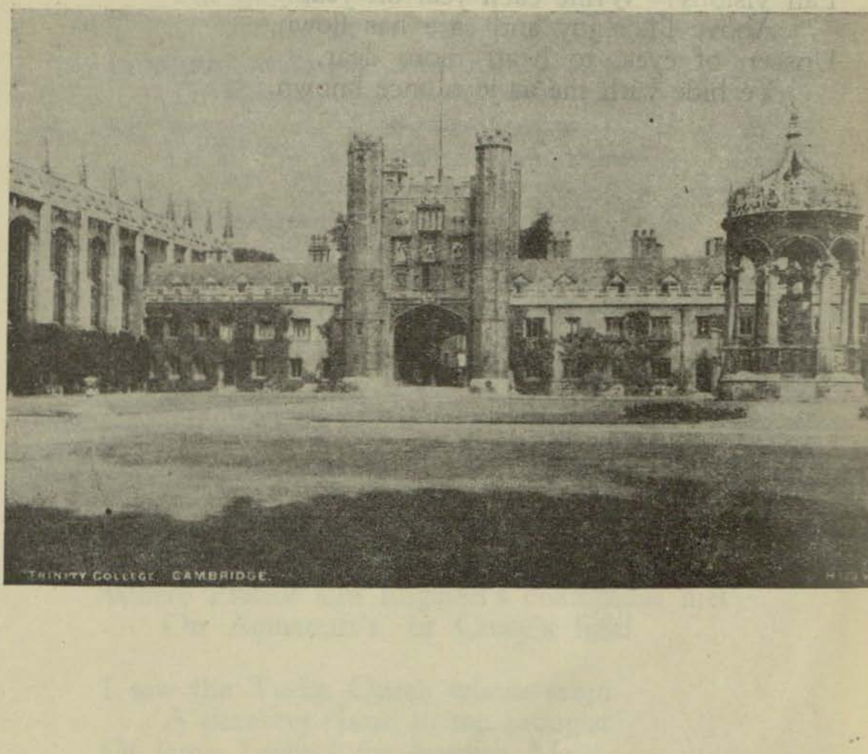
I saw the Tudor Queen whose reign
A dazzling vision to me brought
Of lands beyond the Spanish Main,
And higher, purer, realms of Thought.

And with what joy my heart did swell
When first mine eager eyes did hail

The bowers where thy Muses dwell
    In far-famed Granta's classic vale!

The stately hall, the spacious court,
    The sylvan lawn, the gliding stream—
They are my fancy's fond resort,
    My memory's never-fading dream.

Fair visions! While each year on year
    Above life's joy and care has flown,
Unseen of eyes, to heart more dear,
    Ye bide with me as joys once known.


TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

THE PEASANT

Dedicated to Those in Authority

*The Peasant, a Dialogue in a Country House

First Speaker

Long, long I sighed for rest 'mid scenes like these,
And now to them with feeble steps return.
What happiness to leave life's cares behind,
And loiter in these groves once more to taste
The joys of peace that cities never knew!
To lie at ease and hear the sunlit air
Whisper its gladness to the listening trees,
To harken to the wild birds' warbled notes,
Timed by the plaintive cooing of the dove!
These scattered strains from Nature's harmony
He sends for us, Who bids all sorrows cease.
Sweet soothing sounds!

Second Speaker

What! sweeter even than those
Heard 'mid the silvery dust of crowded streets
In gorgeous towns, where on its golden throne
Your life is stretched as on a gilded rack?
Where pomp of wealth and rank, and boast of power,
From imitative folly grow to guilt;
Then borrowing virtue's garb proclaim themselves
Dispensers of life's blessings? Where ambition
Feigns selfless service as a tempting bait
To catch that stale fish, Popularity?

First Speaker

Wealth has no charm for me, and grandeur none;
The pomp of office I have held in scorn
From first to last; ambition have I spurned,
That feeds the mind on vanity and leaves
A world of ghosts behind. I yearn for peace.

---

*Intended to be dedicated to Sir Theodore Tasker, ex-Revenue Minister Hyderabad State.

Far from the madding crowds of towns and courts,
Far from the traffic and the noisy strife
Of cities, far from haunts of sin and crime—
O let me dwell in sylvan haunts like these,
Where simple hearts with temperate passions glow,
And Nature's useful gifts alone suffice.

Second Speaker

Statesman no more, you'll till your barren field
And play a noble peasant-patriot's part!
Content yet hopeful, eager yet serene,
You'll work with tireless hand and dauntless breast,
And thus you'll raise a monument sublime
For poor Posterity's bewilderment!
Meanwhile you'll force a niggard soil to yield
The bounty of a poet's harvest!
Bird, beast, and insect, storm and drought and blight
You'll hail as blessings sent by Providence!

First Speaker

Is yonder field of green a thing to laugh at?

Second Speaker

Only, 'tis not green—

First Speaker

But all the same, it is an Idyll fair.
Men, women, children, all with grateful hearts
Bend o'er the boon the gracious Powers bestow.
Yon rising crop is now their hope and joy,
Their wealth untold, far dearer to their hearts
Than to the miser is his hoarded gold;

And yet, perhaps tomorrow's sun or shower
May mar their bliss—
What then? They'll labour on
Till hope and joy return. Have we not seen
Full many a time, in the first flush of dawn,
Swift circling clouds o'er fields of ripening corn—
Wild birds that gaily twittering hovered round
To take their share from Nature's common store?
Another morn, when that same field we passed,
Nor bird nor corn was there. Was Nature dead?
Nay, hungry birds, and hungry beings find
Elsewhere 'The Table Spread.' The meanest worm
Is in God's keeping. His the hand that feeds
The bird that flies o'er oceans undeterred.
Yea, from His bounty all His creatures gain
Whate'er sufficeth; His the eye that sees
The hidden wants of all, and His the will
That guards created life in all its forms
By wondrous schemes that man can never gauge.

Second Speaker

Yet man, when fortune smiles on him no more,
Or Heaven, indignant at insulted laws,
Revokes its gifts, with thankless heart repines,
Forgetting that 'tis but excess denied.
To one his crust of bread and thatchéd cot
Are all he needs—his sum of happiness.
Another wants a monarch's dainty fare,
And gorgeous equipage, a palace proud
Soaring in marble grandeur to the skies!
But can all men, though willing to be wise,
Rise to the Sage's height, their wants confine
Within the narrow limits of his plan?

First Speaker

Not all; the wise alone, and those who seek
Nor rank nor wealth nor all the attendant ills

Of luxury and pride, but learn to live
As Nature's liegemen ever on their guard
Against ambition's dreams. Those souls are great
That covet nothing more than sweet content.
Want has no sting for them, and poverty
Is but the mother of high thoughts. Now see,
Here comes a doctor who will soon expound
Wise Nature's plan to us.

Second Speaker

That manly step,
Those shoulders broad and square, that well poised head,
Those sinewy arms and deep expanded chest
Betoken health and vigour. 'Tis a form
To tempt a sculptor's art.

First Speaker

And in it is a soul—
A fearless soul that all might emulate.

Second Speaker

Ah, how unlike the feeble wasted frame,
The victim of our town-bred luxury!
Life's comforts, as we call them, make men weak,
Unnerving hand and heart till age commences
Long ere the middle prime of life be past.

First Speaker

Through life's gay rounds your city stripling goes,
Bent 'neath the weight of self-inflicted harms,—
Seduced by pleasure into lingering pain.
Born of rich parents, pampered, petted, spoiled—
How can he learn that balanced self-control,
The pride of rational man? What follows, mark!
A frame decrepit and a mind oblique,

Ignoble passions, smouldering lust and greed,
Malice and envious hate, hypocrisy.
A moral wreck, to him life's greatest gain
Lies in false pride and pleasure. Vice corrodes
The man that was in him till there is left
Nought but the festering remnants of a soul.

Second Speaker

One such I knew—and seem to see him still.
Lured by false pride, false visions and false hopes,
Health lost, wealth wasted, name and honour gone,
And sunk the guiding light of faith, he strayed
From selfish vice to crime through devious ways.
His grovelling soul false terrors did affright,
More than his idle dreams could solace him.
Thus fouled in heart, in error's mazes lost,
He cursed mankind and oft reviled his God!

First Speaker

But here 's a being with a healthier mind.
He knows not logic but his life has learned
To draw from Nature's laws conclusions just,
That fortify his soul with faith and love.
To him the sun, the air, the leafy trees
That give him shade and shelter, and the moon
And friendly stars that guide his steps by night;
To him the meadow grass and ripening corn,
The barren hillside and the teeming vale—
All these breathe forth the presence of his God.
They bear the stamp of the Eternal Mind,
Mysterious, mighty, bounteous and calm.
Benignant Nature claims him as her own,
As he claims Nature his.

Second Speaker

And Nature's Lord
Grants him His bounty with a gracious hand—

Life's bare necessities! And grants with these
That which can make them blessings--heart's content.
This sweetens life and labour, gives a relish
To root and herb that serve him for a meal.
How nobler far than uttered prayer and praise
The humble good this peasant's life reveals!
Strong, yet he never tramples on the weak;
Poor, yet his manly pride disdains to beg
With flattering tongue, false manner, servile mien,
What power and wealth, with scornful heart and hand,
Give or refuse—degrading favours, cast
As to a hungry dog a meatless bone....
Degrading favours that with shameless pride
Men seek at others' doors though oft repulsed.

First Speaker

True, he is braver, nobler far; his life
Doth shame our lives—and our philosophy.
Content that bids the bosom ne'er repine
Is his true gratitude for God's great gifts.

Second Speaker

His life is both Content and Gratitude.
Ere yet the stars withdraw their fading lights
He quits his straw-bed, faces the fresh breeze,
His grateful heart greeting the morn that brings
Its promise of rewarded toil. We hear him
Chanting his carols like the birds of morn....
And then we see him o'er the ploughshare bent,
Break the hard glebe until the morn be past.
Haply some grassy bank or shaded ground
Hard by, or in the field some leafy tree
With hospitable shade invites repose;
And there he hies to take his simple meal—
At which the Sylvan deities may smile
Before they give their blessings!

First Speaker

Labour is life to him, the moving sun,
His clock that never stops ; so, on he moves
From work to work until the day is done;
And when the sun goes down, his night begins.
He sleeps—no dreams of power his peace destroy;
No dreams of wealth can make or mar his bliss.

Second Speaker

Oft do we hear the thoughtless wondering ask
If ever life's gay pleasures come his way.
Few, few his pleasures, yet in wisdom's eyes
They are worth more than ours; for few his griefs,
Fewer than ours, to compensate the loss.
Such equalising justice doth maintain
The balance of man's joys and sufferings.
How often does the sad, world-wearied heart,
That sees the illusive charms of life decay,
Sigh but to have what life's plain wants require!
Who would not shun the cares of useless wealth,
And rank more useless still?

First Speaker

And borrowed learning, and such cumbrous knowledge
As makes none good, none able to pursue
With steady steps the straight but narrow path
That leads to peace of soul?

Second Speaker

'Twere well indeed could we but reach the height
Of bliss through suffering! But our ardent wishes
Fall often short of this poor peasant's practice,

First Speaker

The more the need to fix our gaze on him.
Whose care-free life of simple toil and ease
May yet conceal some treasure in its folds.
I do believe that Nature, prodigal
In all her gifts, doth secretly endow
His soul with truest piety. And the Muse—
Who knows but that from out the starry skies
Might cast the enchantment of her eyes and voice
Upon his voiceless heart and give it tongue?
Honour to him! the Patriarchs of old
Were labouring hinds like him, and shepherds all;
Yet they, with poet's heart and prophet's fire,
Aspired to climb the starry steps to Heaven!

Second Speaker

And did not some of Rome's imperious race,
Touch with Patrician hands the humble plough
Whene'er the statesman's duties did permit?
Now at the plough, now at the helm, they guided
The ship of state through stormy seas to port.

First Speaker

Ay, 'twas a Golden Age when themes like these
Could thrill the heart. The noblest lyre was strung,—
Even his who sang the travails and the triumphs
That heralded Rome's birth,—for such a theme.*

Second Speaker

What great Æneas did, or Romulus
When he had finished founding Rome, we know not;
Each may have ploughed his field, and tuned his lyre.
But we do know what Garibaldi did.

* Virgil.—*Ed.*

That red-shirt lion-heart of Italy
Hung up his laurels won on glory's field,
Sat down and smoked beneath the olive shade,
Mended with horny hands his battered plough,
And dreamed of happier times when wars should cease
And pruning hooks should bayonets displace!

First Speaker

Is there no hope to cleanse the worldling's heart?
Could not some leaders now their powers unite
And lead the way to fight the present ills,
Instead of making them subserve their aims?

Second Speaker

The poet thus prescribes the cure
'True to itself, philosophy must guide
The heart away from passion and from pride,
And poetry its inmost sense refine
To feel in things of earth the touch divine.'

First Speaker

That 'touch divine' is life if they but knew—
The gift of heaven entrusted to their care.
Let them remember this, and not forget
That power is rooted in this peasant's life.
Make him contented, guard him from those ills
That fill the air today like motes unseen.
To him the rulers owe their wealth and rank,
All that adorns them with the style of great.
Will they not guard him,—raise him from the dust?
Humble his life, yet on it God has laid
A duty in proportion quite as grave
As kings' or statesmen's to uphold the State.
His life's the blood that circles in the veins
Of that ideal,—Country, Nation, State—
The constant theme of frothy eloquence!

Taught by his art, the cunning mason knows
How firm-set at the base the stones must rest
Ere the proud palace rear its head on high.
How long will stand the stately dome or tower
Whose frail foundation is but gliding sand?
The marble wall soon cracks, the gilded roof,
When sinks the base, soon totters to its fall!

Second Speaker

What would you have our sapient statesmen do?

First Speaker

Feel that he is their brother, who has brought
Fresh from his Maker's hands those very powers
On which they pride themselves : a seeing mind,
A feeling heart, and an unbending will—
Untrained for lack of opportunity—
Which be it ours to give and thus fulfil
The Master's purpose and our human duty.
The time is coming when he'll raise his head
And claim his rights as man, and—look to it,
He then may claim more than we care to give!

Second Speaker

They say 'Have we not given all he needs—
The land he tills, security and peace,
And law and justice—and a competence?
And have we not provided Grammar schools,
Both high and low, where peasants' sons may learn—

First Speaker

Grammar of Discontent—and Liberty
Made by Text writers and by Essayists!
Such cheap book-learning of the surface kind
Will fill men with pretensions till they claim,

More than they ought to have,—before their time.
O save him from such learning ! Give him hope
And make him proud and happy in his station
As steward and custodian of his land,
With love and interest rooted in the soil.

Second Speaker

But how is this to be ?

First Speaker

Through human love and kindly sympathy ;
By treating him as something more than dust,
And something better than a labouring ox ;
By teaching him the self-respect we prize
Far above wealth and rank. Our officers
Might yet do much that would encourage him
To honour, not despise, the place assigned
By fate or Nature to him in the scheme
In which his life is fixed ; and this they should
By giving to that place the honour due.
How dull so ever now, and muddy-mettled—
The spark of man in him concealed in clay—
Soon will he look about for something higher
Than what makes him despised.

Second Speaker

Is this not vague ?
Tell us what must be done, and what avoided.

First Speaker

Neither of us is able, I confess,
To furnish a compendium on the subject
For our officials' guidance ; but let me
Just point to yonder model that may serve.

Beyond those farthest tree-tops, where the sky
Looks bluest'gainst the hills, there you may see
Some red-grey roofs. They are not very old—
Some thirty years ago they were not there,
And now they shelter a small colony
Of waifs and strays reclaimed from out the dregs
Of lowest peasantry.

Second Speaker

But by whom?

First Speaker

A foreign Mission has been there at work,
Reclaiming barren soil and barren souls.
Whate'er the end they had in view—to make
Bad converts or good men—they have achieved
Something—nay, much, for they have raised again
The level of their lowered self-esteem,
And made them men once more, who think and feel
That life has ample scope for all who work,
And comforts for the poorest.

Second Speaker

And there we see
The naked clad, the hungry fed, the sick
Tended in hospitals, and orphans fathered
And taught some useful art in school or farm.
In everything the Mission does there is
The feeling heart behind the human touch.
It venerates the sanctity of life
Even in an outcast—as we seldom do.

First Speaker

The Mission Church may touch or fail to touch
His soul, but in the Workshop he can learn
Some useful task that contributes its share
To furnish forth life's comforts in his village.

Such men are sorely needed to improve
The stagnant, filthy, lifeless, village life
Not seldom seen in Indian villages.
Whate'er the cause, the habits of the people
Their faith in unchanged customs, inborn sloth—
Whate'er the cause, the fault is made to lie
Or will be made to lie at our doors;
The more so if we go on teaching them
The use of tongues, not hands—and words, not work.
The Mission knowing how to win the heart,
Begins to train the hands, and thus prevents
The awakened mind from straying far afield.

Second Speaker

Their happy village is a Paradise,
Serene and self-contained; its corporate life
Of mutual love and helpful toil glides on,
In slow but certain self-development
On its own lines. And yet I often wonder
Will not these foreign Missions help to lead
Towards modes and models that are foreign to us?
And will they not hold up to men ideals
That may perchance destroy their Paradise?

First Speaker

I do not think so, for they train up men
And women to a sense of loyalty
And reverence—a trait so often lacking
In school-taught youth. And as they teach the hands
To be productive, they secure the mind
Against the fear of want and discontent
That foster dangerous humours. Thus they make
Industrious, peace-abiding husbandmen,
And artisans with just sufficient knowledge
Of life and duty not to be beguiled
From their vocation into politics.....

(*Unfinished*)

(1912—1942).

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(*Unfinished*).

(1911—1922).



Sir Nizamat Jung and the Editor

PART III

Sonnets

FOREWORD

by

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD HAILEY

IN FEBRUARY, 1950, *Lord Wavell, in the Foreword which he wrote for a collection of the poems of Sir Nizamat Jung, paid a tribute to his charm and personal dignity, his distinguished service to the Hyderabad State, and to his complete mastery of the English language. That collection of poems was devoted mainly to Sir Nizamat Jung's lyrical and occasional verses, and Mr. Zahir Ahmed, who edited them, has now brought together an edition of the Sonnets, some selections from which have been published from time to time from* 1917 *onwards.*

Throughout his long life Sir Nizamat Jung has been an ardent votary of European literature, and it is characteristic of him that he should have devoted so much of his literary effort to the Sonnet, which is perhaps the most exacting form of European metrical usage. An English critic once observed that the Sonnet has always had a fascination for those poets in whom the poetic energy and plastic power are equally combined. But for Sir Nizamat Jung its special attraction also lay perhaps in his feeling that it was the most appropriate form for the expression of the spirit of Islamic culture. For him, poetry has always been in some sense a confession of faith, and if that faith has also had a mundane side it is to be found in his pride for Hyderabad, his home and the scene of his own public career.

"If a man is what he thinks and feels," he once wrote, "I have hopes that I shall be found in my writings, and that Hyderabad will have my relic in them." Time has subjected Hyderabad to a far-reaching political change ; let us hope, however, that it will remain the home of some who will keep alive that liberal spirit and thought of which Sir Nizamat Jung has been so notable and so graceful an exponent.

HAILEY.

London,

INTRODUCTION

SIR NIZAMAT JUNG has had a distinguished and varied career. Born in 1871, he graduated from Trinity College, Cambridge and was called to the Bar in 1895. On return to India, he entered the service of Government in his native State of Hyderabad and rose to be a Judge of the High Court, then Home Secretary, then Chief Justice and finally a Minister of State.

These high offices no doubt added to the variety and wealth of his experience, but it is to other sources that we must look for the inspiration that gave birth to his poetical writings. In fact, as time drew on, poetry became Sir Nizamat's constant refuge from the cares of office, the medium of expression of a sensitive mind which had drunk deep from the fountains of Western and Eastern religions and philosophies and had made them the subject of his own intense meditations. That is the explanation for the richness of his verse, and he has himself said, with characteristic modesty: "They may have little value as poems, but their value to me is that they express some of my innermost feelings and are a confession of faith."

It was in 1918 that Sir Nizamat Jung first became known as a poet to a limited circle of English readers by a small book of sonnets published in London. The present volume contains

those as well as some earlier and later sonnets. It is a tribute to Sir Nizamat's mastery of a language not his own that he chose, with such confident command, an admittedly difficult and exacting form of English verse. Meredith Starr has said of these sonnets: "They contain lines which claim an equal fellowship with the work of those whose names are sonorous in the spheres of poetic genius." Edward McCurdy is reminded of Petrarch; Arthur S. Way says: "Milton's Italian Poems and Swinburne's French ones furnish parallels." *The Times Literary Supplement* wrote of "the singular excellence" of the sonnets "revealing a graceful fancy and true literary taste."

But we must pass from mere astonishment at Sir Nizamat's mastery of the English language to the quality and substance of his verse. These sonnets are in truth the expression, in classic language, of an unbounded faith in human destiny. They reveal the poet as a mystic, sometimes a dreamer, but the purpose of his dreams and the burden of his song is the real.

> What though but a lonely dreamer,
> Let me have consoling dreams,
> Let me dream to find the real.
> In the heart of all that seems.

He does not only hope for the coming of a nobler world; he aspires to it and sees it coming. And here is an evaluation of Mahatma Gandhi which, while being both beautiful and just, stresses the poet's own sense of values:

To prove the power by which the spirit soars
Above life's ills to claim the victor's meed,
Made strong by faith and from ambition freed
A task by prophets honoured—it was yours.

It is a privilege to know Sir Nizamat and an honour to be associated with this introduction to the collection of his sonnets. As a man, he has always been above prejudice, a great gentleman and a cultured and catholic mind. One of his greatest friends, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, herself a great poetess and a great woman, has described him as "poet, politician, courtier, administrator, equally at home in the seclusion of a scholar's study and in the larger world of public affairs, ardent votary of European literature and philosophies, whose mind seems to tarry unduly long in the classic groves and romantic landscapes of Western culture, and now in the ultimate realization of his true destiny is a humble and mystic pilgrim in the caravan of Islam."

No better words could be found for an introduction to Sir Nizamat Jung, the man and the poet.

ZAHIR AHMED

———

Sonnets of
Mystic Love and Beauty

PROLOGUE: IDEAL BEAUTY

As one who wanders lone and wearily
Through desert tracts of Silence and of Night,
Pining for Love's keen utterance and for light,
And chasing shadowy forms that mock and flee,
My soul was wand'ring through Eternity,
Seeking within the depth and on the height
Of Being, one with whom it might unite
In life and love and immortality;

When lo! She stood before me, whom I'd sought,
With dying hope, through life's decaying years—
A form, a spirit, human yet divine.
Love gave her eyes the light of heav'n, and taught
Her lips the mystic music of the spheres.
Our beings met,—I felt her soul in mine!

REBIRTH

TO me no mortal but a spirit blest,
A light-girt messenger of Love art thou—
The radiant star of Hope upon thy brow,
The thrice-pure fire of Love within thy breast!
Thou comest to me as a heavenly guest,
As God's fulfilment of the purest vow
Love's heart e'er made—thou com'st to show e'en now
The Infinite, th' Eternal and the Best.

I clasp thy feet,—O fold me in thy wings,
And place thy pure white hands upon my head,
And breathe, O breathe, thy love-breath o'er mine eyes
Till, like the flame that from dark ashes springs,
My chastened spirit, from a self that's dead
Upon the wings of Love shall heav'nward rise.

THE CROWN OF LIFE

I KNOW not what Love is, a memory
Of Heav'n once known, a yearning for some goal
That shines afar, a dream that doth control
The spirit, shadowing forth what is to be.
But this I know, my heart hath found in thee
The crown of life, the glory of the soul,
The healing of all strife, the making whole
Of my imperfect being,—yea, of me.

For to mine eyes thine eyes, through Love, reveal
The smile of God; to me God's healing breath
Comes through thy hallowed lips whose pray'r is Love,
Thy touch gives life. And, oh let me but feel
Thy hovering hand my closing eyes above,—
Then, then, my soul will triumph over Death.

BEFORE THE THRONE

WHEN on thy brow I gaze and in thine eyes—
    Eyes heavy-laden with the soul's desire,
Not passion-lit, but lit with Heaven's own fire—
I have a vision of Love's Paradise.
Gazing, my trancéd spirit straightway flies
Beyond the zone to which the stars aspire;
I hear the blent notes of the white-wing'd quire
Around Immortal Love triumphant rise.

And there I kneel before th' eternal throne
Of Love whose light conceals him, there I see
Veiled in his sacred light, a face well known
To me on earth, now, yearning, bend o'er me.
Heaven's mystic veil, inwove of light and tone,
Conceals thee not, Belovéd,—I know thee!

WORSHIP

HOW poor is all my love, how great thy claim!
How weak the breath, the voice which would reveal
All that thy soul hath taught my soul to feel—
Longings profound,—deep thoughts without a name.
If God's self might be worshipped, without blame,
In His best works, then would I silent kneel
Before thine eyes,—until my soul should steal
Back, unperceived, to regions whence it came!

If my whole life were but one thought of thee,
That thought the purest worship of my heart
And my soul's yearning blent; if at thy feet
I offered such a life, there still would be
Something to wish for, something to complete
The measure of my love and thy desert.

UNITY

WHEN I approach thee, Love, I lay aside
All that is mortal in me; with a heart
Absolved and pure, and cleansed in every part
Of every thought that I might wish to hide
From God, I come,—fit spirit to abide
With such a pure-eyed spirit as thou art
Whose gaze transfixes with a fiery dart,
Presumptuous passion and ignoble pride.

Yea, thus I come to thee, and thus I dare
To look into thine eyes, I take thy hand,
And its soft touch upon my lips and eyes
Thrills thy pure being, while it lingers there,
Into my heart and soul; —and then we stand
Like those first two that loved in Paradise!

LOVE'S SILENCE

WHEN through thine eyes the light of Heav'n doth shine
Upon my being, and thy whisper brings,
Even as the rustling of an angel's wings,
Joy to my soul and peace and grace divine;
When thus thy body and thy soul combine
To weave the mystic web thy beauty flings
Around my heart, whose thrilling silence rings
With Hope's unuttered songs that make thee mine,—

Ah, then, O Love! what need of words have we,
Who speak in feeling to each other's heart?
Words are too weak Love's message to impart,
Too frail to live through Love's eternity.
Silence, the voice of God alone must be
Love's voice for thee, belovéd as thou art.

THE SUBLIME HOPE

WHAT need to tell thee o'er and o'er again
What eyes to eyes have spoken silently
And heart to heart hath uttered? Love must be
For us a hushed delight, a voiceless pain
Serenely borne. Our lips must ne'er profane
Our inmost feelings, lest the sanctity
Of love be lessened in our hearts and we
Nought higher than the common path attain.

The common path were death to us whose love,
O'erruled by Fate, from earthly hopes debarred,
Must look to Heaven for sublimer joys
Than those which earth can give, which earth destroys.
Our path is steep, but there is light above,
And Faith can make the roughest way less hard.

THE HEART OF LOVE

LOOK in mine eyes, Belovéd, for my tongue
Must never utter what my heart doth claim,
And read Love there, for Love's forbidden name
Dies on my trembling lips unvoiced, unsung.
Nor sighs, nor tears, the bitter tribute wrung
From hearts of woe, must e'er that love proclaim
For which the world's unpitying heart would blame
Thy pity, though from purest fountains sprung.

Fate and the world, they bid wide oceans roll
Between our yearning hearts and their desire;
Yea, lips they silence, but can ne'er control
The heart of Love, nor quench its sacred fire.
I must not speak; O look into my soul—
There read the message which thou dost require!

'TWIXT STAR AND STAR

NOT here, not here, where weak conventions mar
    Life's hopes and joys, Love's beauty, truth and grace,
Must I come near thee, greet thee face to face,
Pour in thine ear the songs and sighs that are
My heart's best offerings. But in regions far,
Where Love's ethereal pinions may embrace
Beauty divine—in each clear interspace
Of twilight silence betwixt star and star.

And in the smiles of cloudless skies serene,
In Dawn's first blush and Sunset's ling'ring glow,
And in the glamour of the Moon's chaste beams—
My soul meets thine, and there thine image seen
More real than life, doth to my lone heart show
Such charms as live in Memory's haunting dreams!

THE HIGHER KNIGHTHOOD

A TIME there was, when for thy beauty's prize—
Hadst thou but deemed my love that prize deserved—
What hope, what faith my daring heart had nerved
For proud achievement and for high emprize!
No Knight, that owned the spell of Beauty's eyes
And wore her sleeve upon his helm, had served
His vows with faith like mine; I ne'er had swerved
One jot from mine for all beneath the skies.

That time is dead, alas! and yet this heart
Is thine, still thine, with Love's high chivalry
And Faith that cannot die; but now its part
Must be a higher knighthood, patiently
To brook life's ills, and, pierced with many a dart,
By sacrifice of self to merit thee.

IN BEAUTY'S BLOOM

AS when the Moon, emerging from a cloud,
Sheds on the dreary earth her gracious light
A smile comes o'er the frowning brow of Night,
Who hastens to withdraw her sable shroud;
And then the dismal shadows' lurking crowd,
Pursued with glitt'ring shafts, is put to flight,
And, robed in silv'ry raiment, soft and bright
Each flower's a queen, and of her beauty proud.

So when thou com'st to me in Beauty's bloom,
And on thy face soft Pity's graces shine,
Thou canst dispel the heavy shades of gloom
From my sad heart, which ceases then to pine;
And Hope and Joy their quenchéd beams relume
And gild the universe with light divine.

ETERNAL JOY

TRUTH is but as the eye of God doth see;
And Love is truth, and Love hath made thee mine.
What though on earth our lives may not combine,
Love makes us one for all Eternity.
God gives us to each other, bids us be
Each other's soul's fulfilment, makes Love shine
Upon our souls as His own light divine,
An effluence of His own deity.

Why ask for more? Our union is above
All earthly unions, ours those heights serene
Where Love alone is Heav'n and Heav'n is Love—
Where never comes the world's harsh breath between
Hope's fruits and flow'rs. Ah, why then earthward move,
Where pure and perfect bliss hath never been?

CONSTANCY

AH, Love, I know that to my love thou art,
And must be in this life, a dream, a name;
But be it joy or grief, or praise or blame,
I give thee all the worship of my heart.
'Tis not for Love to bid life's cares depart;
Love wings the soul for Heaven whence it came.
Such love from Petrarch's soul did Laura claim,
And Beatrice to Dante did impart.

To thee I turn, be thou or near or far,
And whether on my love thou frown or smile,
As, in mid-ocean, to some fairy isle
Palm-crowned, and, in the heav'ns, to eve's bright star
Whose pure white fire allures the vision while
Myriads of paler lights unnoticed are.

CALM AFTER STORM

THOU hast but seen what but mine eyes have shown—
Mine eyes that gazing on thee picture Heaven;
Thou hast but heard what but my voice hath given—
My voice that takes from thine a calmer tone.
Ah! couldst thou know all that my heart hath known,
While with despair's dark phantoms it has striven,
From faith to doubt, from joy to sorrow driven,
Till rescued and redeemed by Love alone,—

Thou wouldst not marvel were my cloudless brow
O'erclouded, were my aspect less serene.
Love smiles on Death, unveils his mystery
Of joy and grief, and Love bids me avow
This truth, with chastened heart and tranquil mien,
Less pure Love's bliss if less Love's agony!

THE STAR OF LOVE

TIME'S cycle rolls—once more I hail the day
On which propitious Heaven sent to Earth,
Disguised in thy fair form, in mortal birth,
The Star of Love, whose pure celestial ray
Glides through the spirit's gloom and lights the way
To Bliss. I hail thy coming midst the dearth
Of nobler aspirations, when the worth
Of hearts like thine had ceased men's hearts to sway.

I greet thee, Love, and with thee scale the height,
That cloudless height where wingéd spirits rest
And where the yearnings of the mortal breast,
From mortal life set free, reveal to sight
That living Presence, that Eternal Light
In which enwrapt the seeker's soul is blest.

IMPRISONED MUSIC

OH, had I but the poet's voice to sing,
Then would the music prisoned in my heart
(Panting in vain its message to impart)
Hover around thee, Love, on trembling wing,
To tell thee of the soft-eyed hopes that cling
To Love's white feet, the doubts and fears that start
And pierce his bosom with a poisoned dart,—
The smiles that soothe, the thoughtless words that sting!

But 'tis not mine, the soaring flight of Song:
I strive to voice my soul, but strive in vain.
Though passion thrills, and eager fancies throng,
Deckt in the varying hues of joy and pain,
The yearning voice—as weak as Love is strong—
Dies murm'ring on Love's throbbing heart again.

LOVE'S MESSAGE

WE will not take Love's name; that little word,
By lips too oft profaned, we will not use.
From Nature's best and loveliest we will choose
Fit symbols for Love's message; like a bird,
Whose warbled love-notes by its mate are heard
In greenwood glade, shalt thou in strains profuse
The prisoned music of thy heart unloose,
While my heart's love is by sweet flow'rs averred.
Then take, O take these fresh-awakened flowers,
The symbols of my love, and keep them near,
Where they may feel thy breath and touch thy hands;
Then sing thy songs to me, in silver showers
Pour forth thine eager soul, and I shall hear.
Ah, thus will Love Love's message understand!

ECSTASY

THE Nightingale upon the Rose's breast
Warbling her tale of life-long sorrow lies,
Till in love's trancéd ecstasy her eyes
Close and her throbbing heart is set at rest;
For, to the yielding flow'r her bosom prest,
Death steals upon her in the sweet disguise
Of crownéd love and brings what life denies,
A mingling of the souls, Love's eager quest.

Thus let my heart against thy heart repose,
Sigh forth its life in one delicious sigh,
Then drink new life from out thy balmy breath;
Thus in love's languor let our eyelids close,
And let our blended souls entrancéd lie,
And dream of joy beyond the reach of death.

THE DREAM

WAS it a dream, when, through the spirit's gloom,
I saw the yearning face of Beauty shine—
Soft in its human aspect, though divine,
Pleading for human love, though armed with doom?
And was it but a dream, that faint perfume,
Blent of loose tress and soft lips joined to mine,
Those fair white arms that did my neck entwine,
That neck's sweet warmth, that smooth cheek's flow'r-like bloom?

Ah! was it true, or was it but a dream
Of bliss that scarce to mortal hearts is given?
Ah! was it thou, Belovéd, or some bright
Phantom of thee that made thy presence seem,
Rich with the warmth of Life, the light of Heaven,
To hover o'er the realms where both unite?

ETHEREAL BEAUTY

NAY, it was thou, what time the Evening Star
Leaned on the purple bosom of the West;
'Twas thou, when o'er the far hills' frowning crest
Fell the soft beams of Cynthia's silv'ry car:
Thyself—than stars and moonbeams fairer far—
A Vision in ethereal beauty drest!
But, when thy head drooped, flow'r-like on my breast,
Then did no word our souls' communion mar:

Love spake to love without a sign or glance,
And heart to heart its inmost depth revealed
As in the thrilling silence of a trance,
And earth and earthly being ceased to be,
And our blent souls at that high altar kneeled
Whence Love doth gaze upon Eternity.

A CROWN OF THORNS

THERE was a crown of thorns upon the head
Of Love when he across my threshold came.
I knew the sign and did not ask his name,
But took him to my heart, although he said,
'The soul's dumb agonies, the tears unshed
That sear the heart, th' injustice and the blame
Of this harsh world,—God wills that I should claim
Through these immortal Life when Hope is dead.'

I took him to my heart and clasped him close,
E'en though his thorns did make my bosom bleed.
Then from the very core of pain arose
A joy that seemed to be the utmost need
Of my worn soul. Love whispered, 'This the meed
Of hearts that keep their faith amidst Love's woes.'

TWO HEARTS IN ONE

TWO hearts made one by Love that cannot die
Whatever life may bring, shall never part;
In life they're one, and e'en in death one heart.
Are we not such, Belovéd, thou and I?
Ah, then, why mourn that 'neath another sky,
Far from these longing arms and eyes thou art?
I clasp thee still, and lo! thy lips impart
New life to me as in the days gone by.

I feel thy heart in mine; our hopes and fears,
Like music's wedded notes together flow;
Our sighs the same, the same our smiles and tears,—
The selfsame bliss is ours, the selfsame woe.
For Love no weary leagues, no ling'ring years—
Two hearts in one nor time nor distance know!

YEARNING

THE night is sweet; thy breath is in the air,
I feel it on my face; thy tender eyes
Look love upon me from yon starry skies.
They bring to me, those glancing moonbeams fair,
The shine and ripple of thy silken hair.
And in the silent whispers and the sighs
That from the throbbing heart of Nature rise,
I hear thee, feel thee, own thy presence there.

Ah, fond deceit! Too soon the heart, unblest,
Unsated, turns from these illusive charms
Back to the haunting dream of heav'n once known:
It pines for those soft eyes, that throbbing breast,
Those sweet life-giving lips, those circling arms—
The breath, the touch, the warmth of Beauty flown.

LOVE'S GIFT

I'M far from thee yet oft our spirits meet;
We share the longings of each other's breast,
And all our joys and sorrows are confest
As though our lips did love's fond tale repeat.
Ah! then thine eyes send forth, mine eyes to greet,
Glances in which thy whole soul is exprest;
Then, like some song-bird flutt'ring in its nest,
I hear thy heart in pulsing cadence beat.

I know its music and I know its thought;
My heart to it th' unuttered words supplies;
I listen to the thrilling melody
Until my soul its subtle tone hath caught.
And then I take it as Love's gift,—it lies
Imprisoned in mine own weak poesy!

EPILOGUE

FROM out the golden dawn of vanished years
There glides into my dreams a form divine,
Of light and love, to soothe the thoughts that pine
For what has been, to stem the tide of tears
That inward flows upon the heart and sears
Its inmost core. A countenance benign,
Where Love and Pity's chastened graces shine,
Reflects the hallowed light of other spheres.

Then to my yearning soul, with care outworn,
Comes, like a strain on ærial wings upborne,
This message from above: 'Let sorrow cease;
Love dies not; 'tis th' immortal life above,
And chastened souls, that win eternal peace
Through earthly suffering, know that Heav'n is Love!'

Sonnets of Meditation

A SEASIDE LESSON

A GLEAM of light sailed o'er the water's breast,—
The sunset's parting message to the shore.
I stood and watched the darkening waves that bore
Its shimmering glance, each one upon its crest.
The purpling light soon faded in the west;
One farewell glance, and it was seen no more.
Darkness crept on behind me and before,
O'er sea and land, and Nature sank to rest.

A fleeting emblem of man's earthly life,
A moment brightened by the fitful gleam
Of hope and joy before the close of day.
With saddening heart I mused, till from the strife
Of faith and fear there rose a beckoning dream
And to another sunrise showed the way.

IN A CALM AT SEA

BOUNDLESS and vast the azure realms on high;
Around, unmeasured tracts of glassy green.
Here let my spirit find a home between
The twin immensities of earth and sky!
Let it range free as pensive heart and eye
Rest on the mellow light that robes the scene;
Be such my vision of the life serene
That faith unveils to hope that cannot die!

Afar, anear I hail the life to be;
And past and present, mingling, form a whole,
As yonder heavens their mystic depths unveil
To show the light of immortality
In glimpses to my ever-yearning soul.
The vision flies—a fleeting light I hail.

A SEASIDE PICTURE

GREY wind-blown clouds were drifting o'er the waves
In giant forms across the dawnlit skies;
Before the sun's bright beams I see them fly,
And soon they sink into their ocean caves.
The winds are hushed, a gentle seatide laves
The murmuring beach; the sun has climbed on high
To gaze on sea and land with sovereign eye.
I sit and watch yon fishing craft that braves

Unfathomed waters in a perilous quest;
And even so I see my fragile bark
Float on and on into the vast Unknown!
Storm clouds of passion past, with tranquil breast
Be't mine to share life's sunshine ere 'tis dark,
Then glide into a haven all mine own!

PEACE

PEACE in the depths of azure skies serene,
And in the stars that gem the brow of night;
Peace in the radiance of the planets bright,
And in the sun's and moon's transparent sheen.
Peace in the lap of earth's reviving green,
And throned upon the mountain's solemn height.
Peace falls, like heaven's never-ceasing light
Upon the heart of Nature's varied scene.

Peace all around—save in the heart of man,
Whose rebel passions stir the breath of strife,
Disowning all the good by God ordained.
He fills with selfish cares the narrow span
Allotted for the nobler aims of life,
And boasts his loss of faith as triumph gained!

SOLITUDE

FAR be the clamour of the multitude
  On treach'rous aims and faithless deeds intent;
And hands unclean, and bosoms passion-rent
By envious hate and malice aye renewed!
Far be they all—far from the heart imbued
With humble faith and love and sweet content,
To whom unnumbered joys from heaven are sent
To make an Eden of its solitude!

The blush of morn o'er mountain, dale and stream;
Birds' matin songs that thrill the yearning breast;
The purple vision floating in the west;
The lang'rous beauty of the pale moon-beam—
All these will soothe the aching heart to rest,
And people sleep with many a golden dream.

MORNING

FAIR smiles the Morn and makes all Nature proud
To wear again her robe of living light,—
E'en from yon grey hills' sky-embosomed height
To this frail shrub with head in reverence bowed.
And hark! from yonder gold-encinctured cloud
Floats down the skylark's song of rapt delight;
From mead and dale with dewy blossoms bright
The song birds hail it with their strains aloud.

Haply such hymns upon Creation's morn
Uprose from out the throbbing Universe,
Floated on wings of light up to the Throne
As tribute for the gift of Life new born,
And made the dregs of Chaos to disperse
Unto the primal Night of realms unknown.

EVENING

THE twilight heavens, what gracious boons they shower
Upon the yearning heart of solitude!
All Nature's still; her tranquil heart imbued
With adoration, owns her Maker's power.
I watch the deepening shadows as they lower,
By flick'ring starbeams to their haunts pursued.
All Nature's still—her ecstasy subdued
To voiceless prayer. So sacred is the hour!

I watch; the twilight fades from off the sky,
And Night comes floating over sea and land,
And clustered stars their myriad sparks reveal
To blazon forth the azure vault on high.
I watch the heavens till in my heart I *feel*
The Mystery no heart can understand.

NIGHT

NIGHT with her crown of stars! It is the hour
Whose spell can make the heart a seeing eye;
It hails some light ne'er seen on earth and sky,
And drinks deep rapture from its mystic power.
Faith soars aloft, and scorns her earthly dower
Of fleeting joys; the spirit fain would fly
Back to the presence of her God on high,
To find again Love's consecrated bower.

What beams celestial compass her around
When Heaven reveals to her its promised store
Of everlasting Bliss as life to be!
The stars invite her, and she spurns the ground
To be commingled with God's light once more
And be encradled in Eternity!

THE POET AND THE NIGHTINGALE

FROM starlit groves the Nightingale her song
Sends forth upon the night to greet his ear;
It wakes his brooding soul that fain would hear
The voice that in his heart lay prisoned long—
Some chord it touches at whose bidding throng
Commingling joy and pain and hope and fear,
And yearnings dumb that sought for many a year
The trancéd ecstasy her notes prolong.

Her voice is but the voice of his own soul—
The voice of rapture melting into pain;
Both yearn for happier haunts, serener skies.
His heart is pulsing 'neath the soft control
Of hers, that soars and sinks, and soars again
Till 'mongst the stars its echo faints and dies.

ALL-PERVADING LOVE

THROUGHOUT the Universe with subtle force
Immortal Love from orb to orb doth flow.
It bids alike earth's lowliest flowers to blow,
And heaven's bright stars to keep their destined course.
All life is Love—the union in divorce
Of formless atoms moving to and fro;
It knows no difference, bids the high and low
United own their one primeval Source.

Through Love doth Nature to man's heart reveal
His kinship with the worm beneath the sod;
Their being is from God and shares from far
The light unseen of heaven's remotest star.
Yea, Love's the breath of God and makes us feel
Partakers of the infinite grace of God!

HOUSE OF GOD

CHURCH, mosque, or temple for the spirit pure—
The soul's devotion, or the builder's art?
Vain rites, or formless ritual of the heart
Thrilled by a Presence which will aye endure?
What pomp of marble can the soul allure
To Heaven's height? What tinted rays that dart
Through long-drawn aisles to light each shadowed part?
What soaring hymns can faith from doubt secure?

What need, O man! that stately columns rise
Where thou dost kneel, or that loud anthems swell
To waft thy aspiration to thy God?
His Church lies spread around beneath the skies;
The holiest of His altars is the sod,
Wherein the mystery of Life does dwell!

THE DEAD

WHERE live the dead when they are lost to sight?
Their peaceful home is in Eternity.
Life's prison gates are opened, they are free
To soar on ærial wings unto the height
To seek the Presence—living Grace and Light.
And these surround them where Infinity,
Pulsing with power, is as a shoreless sea
Beneath the moon's soft radiance, calm and bright.

There live the dead, their toils and troubles o'er—
All passions past, all longings and all fears,
Ambitions, discontent, envy and hate.
They live with Him, and evil nevermore
Can touch or stain them as in bygone years;
They live in Him—beyond the power of Fate.

EXPECTATION

THERE is a secret sorrow at the core
Of satiate hearts ; e'en so the Powers ordain.
The heart still dreams of what it hopes to gain
As promised gifts from Heaven's unbounded store.
It were benumbed if thrilled by hope no more,
And dead alike to pleasure and to pain
If promised bliss were but delusion vain—
Darkness behind, no coming light before.

Undying hope unto the heart is given,
Wrapt in the nameless longing of Desire—
The baffling quest, the guerdon seldom won!
Some light shines o'er the horizon, as from Heaven ;
It glows afar, an ever-living fire—
The Morn of morns beyond the setting Sun!

HISTORY

KINGDOMS and crowns for conquerors and kings!
And History's gorgeous pageant passes by,
Where pomp and pride of power's enthroned on high
'Mid loud acclaims and secret- murmurings.
The pageant fades; another cycle brings
New power to knowledge: Science learns to fly,
And through the trembling ether of the sky
Is heard the whirring of Icarian wings.

But hark! There faintly echoes from afar
Faith's anguished cry that bids all strife to cease;
A Seer's voice is heard—and all is still.
A faint light gleams above the horizon's bar;
It heralds faith new born, and dawn of Peace.—
A reassurance of divine Goodwill.

WORLD WOES

THE world's deep woes, its passions and its
tears,
If preordained and woven in life's scheme,
Can they be ill, however ill they seem
To frail mankind's desires and hopes and fears?
If born of man's misdeeds through crowded years
Of mad endeavour and distempered dream,
Then is it for the heart of man to deem
God's ways unjust, though stern His will appears?

The will of God is universal Peace
Amidst the restless forces that abound
In Nature and perform their destined part.
His laws change not, their functions never cease,
But work unseen in silent depths profound.
The Peace of God resides in Nature's heart!

TIME

O TIME! Thy chariot wheels have wandered o'er
A dismal course by ruthless Fate's decree
Life is eclipsed and faithless hearts are free
From sanctities that faith revered before.
They are benumbed by poison at the core,
And wisdom's blinded vision cannot see
The ills that are, the ills that are to be,
The good that's passing to return no more!

Was this thine errand, or was it to raise
All hearts to honour's height, to lower pride
And teach it how to strive for human good?
Vain were thy boast that thou canst cast aside
Kingdoms and thrones on which men fix their gaze
Until all nations owned their brotherhood!

DEPARTING YEAR

UPON the brink of this fast fading Hour,
Wherein the old year glides into the new,
I stand, life's fading visions to review
As from the summit of a misty tower.
My heart awaits its long expected dower
Of promised bliss; and eager hopes pursue
Life's joys and woes, the false lights and the true,
As preordained by a benignant Power!

I watch the shadowy phantoms of the past
Linger awhile amid the wrecks of time,
Until they fade—as all illusions fade—
And leave behind no vestige of their prime.
Yet faith still longs to see the Future cast
Some bright beam forward through the deepening shade.

NEW YEAR

REVOLVING Year! What bringst with thee — a ray
Of hope to cheer once more life's deepening gloom?
Our world is as a sick man's cheerless room
That waits the dawning of a painless day!
Canst thou bring back old creeds that did not stay?
Or bid hope's faded flowers renew their bloom?
Or bring new lights with thee to re-illume
Long-honoured faiths that Time has swept away?

Ah! Once thine eyes were bright and gazed above
Tow'rd Heaven's lights that shone upon thy brow.
Their beams were in thy heart as on thy face,
And made thee herald of Goodwill and Love.
Though dark the day, we'd fain believe that thou
Returnst once more as harbinger of Grace!

The Realm of Faith

THE REALM OF FAITH

WHEN sword and sceptre, crown and throne were cast
A shapeless wreck round Time's devouring shore,
God's will could yet remould the shattered past,
Rebuild Life's throne though empires were no more.
Their conquering might sunk in oblivion,
Their ancient glories sepulchred in loam,
Egypt, Assyria, Media, Babylon
Were names,—and fading memories Greece and Rome.

God's Grace triumphant bade the future rise
From out the past, and hope and faith, reborn,
Strove for the empire of the earth and skies,
And changed the night of ages into morn.
And Prophets rose, supreme o'er space and time,
Who gained unconquered realms by faith sublime.

JESUS, THE BREATH OF GOD

SAVIOUR of Hearts! Man's spirit seeketh thine;
Raise and ennoble it, let it dwell with thee,
Freed from the errors of mortality,
To hold communion with the Power divine.
God's breath was in thee and the task was thine
To give to life thine own soul's purity
As heav'n-born Faith, and suffering Virtue free
From bonds that did her flagging wings confine.

Yea, thine it was, the breath of Faith that brought
The light of Heaven man's spirit to illume;
And thine the Word that from the illusive gloom
Of misbelief the soul's deliverance wrought;
And thine the crowning glory to have sought,
For saving Truth and Right, the martyr's doom!

MOHOMMED, THE BLESSED MESSENGER

I

UNKNOWN to self, unconscious of his power
He gazed aloft where Faith's bright vision lay.
Beyond this earth, beyond the light of day
He gazed afar as from a lofty tower.
Morn, noon and night, in brightest, darkest hour
He saw in all things near and far away—
In birth, in death, in growth and in decay,
From man to lowliest worm, from star to flower,
The Maker's power revealed. Each wish, each thought
Came as a breath from Him, no longer far :
A breath of light, a light from breath divine,
Charged with the Word. It was a beacon fraught
With hope for all, a never-setting star
Whose unextinguished beams through ages shine.

II

STILL gazing upward, waiting—such the part
To test his worth the Power ordained on high;
No torments forced the tribute of a sigh,
No weak repining owned the secret smart.
No hero's breast was pierced with such a dart;
And none so meekly brave, did so defy,
With dauntless bosom and with steadfast eye,
And patient faith, the anguish of the heart.

Faith triumphed over all, and travails o'er,
The world with all its gifts lay at his feet.
But on another world was fixed his gaze,
Where good alone shall live for evermore,
And where the dead shall rise their Lord to greet,
Peace in their hearts, and on their lips His praise.

III

THE veil is lifted; let all mankind see
In Heaven and Hell the mystery of Doom;
In Life, the spirit's splendour and its gloom;
In Death, the mask of Immortality!
Such was the mandate and it bade him be
The Messenger of Truth and Light to illume
The heart of man where evil still finds room,
And self-deluding sin takes sanctuary.
Soldier and saint, unvanquished though alone,
High-souled, pure-hearted Leader of mankind!
Light-bearer, guide entrusted and ordained!
O lead us on from height to height unknown
Till God as ever-living Truth we find
And Peace be ours when this last height is gained!

MEDINA

HOME of my heart, Medina! Thine the call
I hear across the heaving centuries.
Borne on the desert air and ocean breeze,
It comes to me while kings and kingdoms fall.
It rings afar and triumphs over all
Illusive dreams of nations' destinies;
It bids all baffling hopes of glory cease,
And vain ambitions that men's hearts enthral.

Thine is the voice of Faith in trial's hour—
The voice of Faith, whose call is ne'er in vain;
The Faith that quells all discord and all strife,
And gains high power by abjuring power.
And thine the patience that despiseth pain
By making poverty the pride of life.

THE GREAT KHALIFS OF ISLAM

THEY stand like stars upon life's firmament,
  Nature's true sons, Arabia's men of might;
Heralds of faith and guardians of right,
They breathe into our hearts their breath unspent
It vibrates through the world, a fair portent
Of greatness yet to be, as from their height
Above all earthly thrones, still girt with light,
God's empire they proclaim by His assent.

Chosen of God, and taught to gaze on one
Ordained by Him to bear the living Word,
Called forth by Him the living light to hail,
They saw Earth's darkness fly before the Sun,
And in their souls a thunder-music heard,
Proclaiming God as Light that ne'er can fail.

PAX ARABICA

A TIME there was when from Arabia's plain
Onward the tide of Faith as conquest rolled,
And many a warlike race and warrior bold
Did bow the neck the Arab Peace to gain.
From Persia's Magian shrines to Gothic Spain,
From Memphian deserts to Byzantium old
Arabia's banner flew, beneath whose fold
Ne'er did the heart of Muslim leap in vain.

The Prophet's Ensign greets the eye of Heaven!
It nerves the arm, it bids the heart ne'er quail
When crowding dangers threaten near and far.
"O ye unto whose manly hands 'tis given!
The past looks on, let not its glory pale;
The eye of God shines through the clouds of War."

THE VOICE FROM PALESTINE

WHEN Europe, roused by Peter's fiery call,
Had all her banded chivalry arrayed,
And prince and peer a solemn vow had made
As champions of the Cross to stand, or fall
Beneath the Holy City's leagured wall,
Our sires came forth to meet them, undismayed,
Their hands as stainless as the shining blade;
And Faith was theirs, that nothing could appal.

Their blood burns in our veins, a stream of fire;
The light that lit their eyes, glows in our hearts;
Our life is as the fervour of their breath.
We'll guard our homes, each one as did his sire,
With Islam for our shield 'gainst fortune's darts
And God our refuge both in life and death!

Sonnets of the Spirit

TO FAITH

O LIGHT unseen! lead thou us onward still,
And guide the purer passions of the soul,
That man's disparted life again made whole
May claim its birthright of divine goodwill.
Lead us through strife to power to fulfil
Life's purpose wrapt in Nature; shape, control
Each growing impulse in us to enrol
The chastened with the blest redeemed from ill.

With us in life, so be thou ours in death,
Unite the past and present—there and here!
O link our earth and heaven with one beam
That radiates from the Source! Let each drawn breath
Bring light to make our darkness disappear,
And mirror forth the Real in our dream!

LIFE-GIVER

LOVE yearns for life. Oh! deem it not profane
If in thy fount I seek my soul to slake.
Thou art the Source of life, and I must take
Something of Thee that may my life sustain.
Thine is the Spring and thine the healing rain
That bids the earth from death-like trance awake.
Thy breath is life and hath the power to make
All withered roots to live as flowers again!
Thou art the Heaven of heavens, a symbol pure
Of life that was and is and aye shall be.
Thy will gives life to dust and bids it live;
That dust entombed, its essence doth endure
To claim from thee its high prerogative,
And find in thee its Immortality!

LIFE

THY breath gave life to all, thy love hath crowned
Man's life with hope of immortality.
Thine is the light that falls on land and sea,
And thine the golden haze that floats around.
Thy will arouses from beneath the ground,
Life that is feebly striving yet to be ;
It rises and lo! flowers in grove and lea
Are in the sunbeams' golden tresses bound !
Thine are the beams, as life and light and love
That from thy presence to man's soul are sent ;
And as Heaven's blessings still around him fall.
And thine the will that spread around, above,
Doth guide the powers unto Nature lent,
Infusing, penetrating, circling all!

THE OFFERING

I BRING no garlands of Pierian flowers,
  As for Apollo's brow the Muses twine
By sacred streams whose living waters shine
In verdant shade through Amaranthine bowers.
I've culled no blossoms that in bounteous showers
Fall in the lap of Faith from hands divine;
No hallowed offerings hold these hands of mine,
As may be grateful to celestial powers.

Though poor the gifts that I before thee lay,
O Giver of all gifts! wilt Thou refuse
These flowers unprized, these wild weeds trailing low,
From me a loiterer on life's common way?
What Thou didst lend, 'twas not for me to choose:
Or withering weeds, or fairest flowers that blow.

INVOCATION TO THE DEPARTED

THERE is a secret chamber in my mind
Where, untouched by the breath of care and pain,
All treasured relics of the past remain
In fancies sweet and pleasing thoughts enshrined;
All forms, words, actions—beauteous, true and kind
As lights in gloom remembered, live again;
Or as the lingering scent, the haunting strain
That flowers and music dying leave behind.

And from that fane, where memory long has hung
Full many a votive wreath, I send to you
These fragile tokens as the gift of love.
O keep them green! What I have left unsung,
'Tis yours to know where spirits will renew
Their uncompleted task in realms above.

SOUL-MUSIC

METHOUGHT I heard within my soul a strain,
More sweet than those charm'd lyres whose murmurs fell
On glades Sicilian, or the fall and swell
Of faery melodies on moonlit plain.
With soothing touch as that of dewy rain
On thirsting flower, did Faith her message tell.
Peace came into my heart, a balm to quell
All doubt and fear, all sorrow and all pain.

A spirit-song, not from the fabled Mount
The Muses love, but from a holier seat
Than ever to Apollo's choir was known.
My spirit rose with it and sought the Fount
Of mercy, grace and light, and learned to greet
The Power that breathes in all, yet stands alone.

THE MUSES' BOWER

HOW vain my search in flowery mead or dell,
Or blossomed grove afar, or smiling lawn,
Glad in the glow of sunset or of dawn,
To find the bower where the Muses dwell!
Deep in the gloom and squalor of a cell
Where pain and penury lingered pale and wan,
From heaven's pure breath and day's glad beams withdrawn,
I heard their lyres' consoling anthems swell.

No heart's delight so sacred as its woe;
Within the suffering soul is Godhead's shrine.
He pours on grief the solace of His care;
His precious gifts their ministering hands bestow—
As breath of joy to patient hearts that pine,
As light of hope to bosoms of despair!

THE SEEKER

OUR eyes behold the fairest forms on earth,
Such as the eager heart can but adore;
Our memory guardeth what once Beauty wore—
The rarer jewel of the Spirit's worth.
Yet will the yearning heart oft find a dearth
Of what it seeks—some vanished light of yore
That in a fleeting dream had passed before
Its sightless vision ere its mortal birth.

For that it waits—some Effluence divine,
Some Loveliness ineffable, unseen
Save in a trance when soul and sight are one.
Thus led by hope, and yet condemned to pine,
Blest and unblest amidst life's changeful scene,
The Seeker seeks until his day is done.

IMMORTALITY

WHAT are we? Why exist? Why cease to be?
Whether in death this eager questioning mind
A way unto eternal life will find?
I asked and asked, and then I gazed on thee,
O Nature! In thy deep serenity
I read the Maker's art, wherein confined
Lay growing worlds as atoms hid behind
Perpetual Change; 'twas Immortality!

My heart was calmed, for spread around it lay
Creation's realms wherein the breath of life
Impelled by some unknown, unbounded power,
Was moving ever onward on its way:
The spirit moulding as by endless strife,
Its shell from form to form from hour to hour.

SOUL-SYMBOLS

THESE yearnings of the Soul within the breast,
Are they but of the flesh? If but a dream,
From earthly touch our passions they redeem;
They come from Heav'n our love and faith to test.
When dark the night and sombre clouds invest
The light above, when life itself doth seem
Lost to our gaze, 'tis then some flickering beam
May guide our vision to some starry crest

Whence we may see, inscribed upon the scroll
Of God's Creation, symbols faint but pure,
Whose shadow falls across life's dismal way.
Such be our yearnings, and through them the soul
Finds Love and Truth and Beauty that endure
Beyond the narrow limits of our day.

SOUL-WEARINESS

HOW long shall I, sense-trammelled, wearily
Gaze on the heavens and scan them, star by star,
Fast bound to measured Time as to a spar
In my lone voyage o'er Being's boundless sea?
O for a feeling of Infinity
That I, a fragment sundered and afar,
May feel Life's essence in all things that are
But signs and symbols of Thy Deity!

Give sight to faith, and faith unto my sight
Through calm, through storm, through changing night and morn;
Not helmless nor adrift from wave to wave
Of impulse, but led onward to Thy light
In calm assurance till in me is born
Thy Grace, the heavenly pilot that can save.

SPIRIT VISION

WEARY and worn, upon life's rugged way
I seemed to toil alone in endless night;
Then came a vision of Celestial Light—
The dawn of Hope that ushered gladsome day.
My spirit mirrored Heaven and a ray
Of light unknown did make its being bright;
Life seemed reborn into a new delight,
A dream-like ecstasy my soul did sway!

No scene of heaven or earth before mine eyes,
Yet not afar, my veiled sight could discern
A fleeting image—some remembered Heaven!
A Heav'n that oft is near, yet often flies
As in a dream, and makes the bosom yearn
For Bliss of which the promise erst was given.

AD ÆTHERA

A MYSTIC spell is in the eyes of Night;
Stirs nameless passions, makes the spirit long
To soar on radiant pinions swift and strong,
Up to the regions of eternal Light;
Where clustered constellations burning bright,
Move to the music of some unheard song
While meteor, stars and planets whirl along
Their path ordained along heaven's boundless height.

The spirit wakens in some realm erst known,
Where she was borne along upon the wings
Of Love divine and taught its breath to feel.
There heaven and earth and all the starry zone
Around it are but symbols, whence there springs
The nameless Bliss no tongue can e'er reveal.

WAITING

ANOTHER day, and yet another day
Of visions fair that bring but sad delight;
Another night, and yet another night
Of dreams that come to cheer but will not stay!
Not childhood's dreams, when heaven around us lay,
Nor rising manhood's visions bold and bright,
But clouds in which some far-off flickering light
Allures the wanderer on his weary way.

Life wanes, but not the longings of the heart;
They twine themselves around the Spirit-voice
And as soft trammels of the Soul remain.
Fain would we stay, yet fain would we depart,
With saddened heart in spirit we rejoice—
Afloat 'twixt earth and heaven; but not in vain.

VICTORY

HEART-SORE, I longed for rest and sighed for peace;
Exchanged life's bitter pleasures, pleasing cares
For baffling hopes that lured me to despair.
Complaints to heaven and earth brought no release;
The cage grew straiter, madness did not cease
To dash against the bars with bosom bare.
I turned—and welcomed patience as my share,
A holier guest than joy to bring me ease.

And then I smiled at woes, laughed at the pain
Of mocking passions and the flight of youth,
And Hope's illusions; watched the bitter strife
Betwixt the False and True; and did regain
My birthright and my freedom, and in sooth
That Peace which Heaven ordained for me with Life.

MAN

GOD'S kingdom and the bounds of earth and skies,
And time and change and all eternity,
Yea, all the myriad forms of life that be,
Are measures of man's worth, and Love, the prize.
Until through death a nobler self arise
Keep thy faith pure lest heaven ordain for thee
The death that knows no immortality,
The grave that hides His presence from thine eyes.

Yea, lose thyself in all that He hath made,
To live in all that He hath made to live;
So living, shalt thou find eternal life.
Strong in thy faith, undoubting, unafraid,
Give to the world the best thou hast to give;
Find love where love is not; find peace in strife!

CALM IN STORM

WHEN angry storm-clouds sweep across the skies
And ocean-waves are hurled upon the shore;
When overhead amidst the thunder's roar
In fatal forkéd flames the lightning flies;
The stricken earth supine and prostrate lies,
Or thrills and shudders to its very core.
E'en then sublime and placid as before
The mountain peaks in solemn grandeur rise.

So thou my soul, upraised by faith and love
Disdain the ills around, and seek to be
Above the tumult and the jarring strife
Of mortal passions on the heights above!
Thus shalt thou live unconquered, calm and free,
To hail thy freedom as the boon of life.

GOD'S GRACE

A TRANCE, a dream, a light, a touch of Grace;
A Voice scarce heard that makes the heart beat high;
A Presence that one moment hovers nigh,
Whose trail from earth to heaven the Soul may trace:
A Vision, though we see nor form nor face;
A Spirit-form that leans on earth and sky;
A Breath that gives our longings wings to fly—
As we unto the dust our hearts abase.

God thus reveals Himself to those that bend,
So doth to anguished souls His peace impart.
So to the humblest faith its victory.
His angels are pure thoughts that still attend
The strife and travail of the laden heart
That sense-imprisoned, prays for liberty.

THE MYSTERY OF BEING

WHAT hand can lift the evil, what eye can see
That which lies hid within the heart of Doom—
The mystery of mysteries wrapt in gloom
That mocks the searchings of mortality?
Do keen-eyed Science, proud Philosophy
To pierce the dim partition still presume?
Their lights make visible but not illume
The darkness that surrounds Life's mystery!

Vain wish to know; 'twere wisdom to embrace
With Faith what reason never can explore.
Enough for man to feel within his heart
God's precious gifts that thought can never trace.
Enough to know that His unbounded store
Hath Bliss for all, that never will depart.

THE SEER

HE pictured realms beyond the stars of night,
All heaving as with passion deep and strong;
Creation's secrets that had waited long
Leapt forth from primal darkness into light.
Their signs were flashed, as from some crested height,
Earthward while Nature's cycle rolled along.
In Prophet's vision and in Poet's song
Were caught the gleam and music of her might.

False dreams, we ask, or waking memories
Of all that lay around us, and before—
Revealing Life in form, in semblance, Power?
Could we but see them as the Seer sees:
What was and is and shall be evermore—
Worlds in a glance and æons in an hour!

SPIRIT-LAND

AH! vain the hope on life's dark slope to find
The visions of our youth embodied fair;
And vain the wish within our hearts to share
The glory of the dawn when day declined.
Nay, said a voice, thy Visions are thy Mind.
Undimmed by all the clouds of grief and care
They'll rise again into the upper air
When thou shalt leave life's fading scene behind.

What though the shades are gathering overhead,
And life's grey hours in swift succession run?
Beyond the stars of eve thy visions stand
Against the darkening heavens till night is fled.
Come, greet another morn, another sun,
And hail the splendours of the Spirit-land!

CONSOLATION

WHEN life is in the sere and yellow leaf,
  Wouldst thou but mourn the Spring, and splendour fled?
When Autumn shades are gathering overhead,
Sigh for the Summer's glories, all too brief?
Nay, search and find some grains left in thy sheaf;
'Mid withering leaves some ripe fruit golden-red.
Why mourn o'er vain desires long since dead?
Why stretch thy hand to probe the heart of grief?

Sunshine and gloom, dead leaves and laughing flowers,
And joy and sorrow, hope and fear and strife—
Symbols of change—they are God's gifts to thee.
Why make thy heart the tomb of buried hours?
All Heaven is thine to win! Is not thy life
One and coeval with Eternity?

LIFE IN DEATH

WHY mourn for one who gains the blissful state
Of peace as recompense for earthly strife
And timely rescued from the harms of life
Is havened safe beyond the reach of fate?
And why let blinded passion hold debate
O'er mysteries with which God's will is rife?
From life to death, from death again to life
Creation moves; what matter soon or late?

Faith as His breath, consoles the pining heart,
And to the good death is another name
Of life redeemed of all its earthly wrong.
Their memories bide when mortal forms depart,
And love receives the passing breath of fame
As sweet sad echo of an ended song.

HOMEWARD FLIGHT

HE makes all things unto their source return,
Who Death ordained as Life's sublimest creed.
He is the Fount of Being and our need
Is to be merged in Him—The Life Etern.
Ay, this the ever-pining heart must learn
If from its doubts and fears it would be free.
Thrice happy he who hails as life's best need,
The homeward flight that ends his brief sojourn!

What life-long fears are turned to hope in death!
Faith opens wide the portals that reveal
The wonders of God's Kingdom to our eyes.
A moment's tremor of the passing breath,
A moment's pang; they have the power to heal
The anguished heart around which Mercy lies.

"KNOW THYSELF"

AWHILE I peered into my heart and read
Some of its mystic lore; saw depths profound
Involved in gloom, which Reason could not sound.
I saw the waifs of thought that overspread
Life-currents and concealed the fountain head;
But ne'er could gauge the instincts that abound
Within the depths. I've sought but never found
Myself—nor ever shall till I be dead!

I've glanced at Science and Philosophy
And seen them groping with uncertain hands
Upon the outskirts of Reality.
I need them not;—'tis not my need to know;
Where Reason falters, blind Faith understands.
My heart shall lean on this; and better so!

LIFE AHEAD

IT is a sad delight once more to trace
  Some long evanished dream that yet may be
Found as a shadow in the memory—
A formless beauty, or a visioned grace:
Some fleeting semblance of a form or face
Ne'er seen by eyes in all its purity;
Whose memory bides within us hauntingly;
Which neither time nor grief can e'er efface.

Such sad delight, such yearning of the heart,
What pensive soul would willingly forego
For all the earthly joys this world can give?
The heart is dying as its moods depart;
The world is dying as the heart beats low;
Yet there's a Light ahead that bids it live.

Sonnets of Persons and Places

SOCRATES

THE noblest of the soul's high gifts was thine,
That Hellas gave to after-ages: she,
Who had not gazed beyond mortality,
Caught from thy dying glance the rays that shine
Beyond Life's bourne; they lit the Olympian's shrine
And Orcus' dread abode. By thee made free,
Life learned to smile on Death and, raised by thee,
Reason, transformed to Faith, was made divine.

Greater than earth-born men in self-command,
Breathing some light from Heaven with each breath,
Fighting the fight supreme, 'twas thine to know
A Prophet's spirit-call. Blest was the hand
That held the brimming hemlock cup to death—
A symbol of undying life to show.

PLATO

HE lived with Beauty mirrored in his soul.
It was the beauty and the majesty
Of this fair earth, the vast and solemn sea,
And of the skies where starry myriads roll.
He looked beyond, and in the Infinite Whole
He saw the Maker's mind,—the mystery
Of Love and Beauty, Truth and Harmony
Pervading Life. In him did Faith control

Misdoubt, and Reason vanquished Reason's pride
Until the ceaseless war of hope and fear
Was calmed by thoughts that soothed the soaring mind.
His spirit pierced the many veils that hide
The Eternal, till he saw with vision clear
The final Good ordained for humankind.

MARCUS AURELIUS

NOT mine, not mine, ye Gods! the pomp and power
Of Rome's imperial throne. Not mine the will
That claims the world's allegiance to fulfil
The destiny of Rome; 'tis yours, who shower
Your bounty in your gifts from hour to hour
On Rome and me. O guard us from all ill
That flows from might abused, subduing still
The passions that a mortal heart devour!

On me, on me your minister ye lay
An Empire's burden. O, but grant to me
The godlike attributes of power, your own:
Truth, mercy, justice in impartial sway;
A Roman's blameless pride that mine may be
Clean hands, clean heart upon an Empire's throne.

EPICTETUS

A SLAVE! And yet no monarch on his throne
Could claim a mind as firm, a heart as free,—
A slave rejoicing in the liberty
That nought but faith and blameless conscience own.
His cheerful suffering by patience grown
To power sublime and poised self-mastery,
Was mightier than the might of empery,
And holier than the pride to monarchs known.

No laurelled head was ever raised so high
As this poor bondman's, whom the Powers above,
To bless his bonds, Olympian honours gave.
No monarch's soul save Antonine's could vie
With his in courage, piety and love:
Rome's Emperor he, and he—a Grecian slave!

VIRGIL

TO Priam fallen from his high estate,
To Ilium's towers by steel and fire laid low,
To Hector's travail and Cassandra's woe,
To Trojan prowess overruled by fate
Thy tears were due. Not pride bade thee relate,
How out of these Rome's greatness was to grow,
But Pity's heart in thee was steeled to show
The destined glory of the Roman State.

Yea, thou hadst tears for human suffering;
Thy soul could trace beneath man's changeful lot
The dim dark thread of iron Destiny.
The cry of ages never ceased to ring
Within thy heart, and never was forgot
The Vision of the World revealed to thee.

HAFIZ

HE bowed his head before the veil of Doom
When in lone vigils did around him close,
Like clouds, the shadowy wings of voiceless woes.
All, all was dark till through the glow and gloom
Of suns that set to rise beyond the tomb,
Unto his longing eyes did Heav'n disclose
Life's fadeless blossom, Beauty's perfect rose
Blooming on earth with Eden's primal bloom.

Then darkness fled from out the heart of night
And, trailing glory, blissful visions came
Floating on golden pinions swift and strong.
Then in new worlds of rapture and of light—
All nameless yearnings found in Love a name,
All voiceless passions found a voice in Song.

SHAKESPEARE

DESPITE his 'little Latin and less Greek'
The pen of Shakespeare had the magic art
To probe the secrets of the human heart
In darkest depths their hidden founts to seek :
The guileless love of Desdemona meek,
The malice of Iago's poisoned dart,
The laggard doubts of Hamlet, that would start,
Turn all awry, make resolution weak.

'Twas neither Greece nor Rome, the poet's pen,
Dipt in the human heart, could paint each mood
Of love or hate or hope or fear or rage.
His breath could make the passions live again
As action, not as Fancy's phantom brood.
His voice was for all time, not for an age.

SHELLEY

HE lived on earth unblest, who soared sublime
On aerial wings to pierce the region where
The spirit of the Universe lays bare
The secret of her beauty. In that clime,
Beyond the fading bournes of space and time,
The homeless exile found a home more fair--
Beauty's abode of peace,—such joys to share
As are the spirit's in her sinless prime.

And aye his dream foreshadowed the Unknown:
He saw fair Nature moulded in God's will
As Life and Truth and Love and Liberty.
A sadly-joyous, pure-eyed spirit lone,
Himself a song, a vision to fulfil
The promise of his magic minstrelsy!

HANNIBAL

A MAN from Afric's coast, not Roman born;
Yet he could put to shame the might of Rome!
Bred on the soil of Dido's ancient home
In thoughts of dire revenge, each night and morn
Within his heart was this dread vow resworn:
To dare grim mountain heights and wild sea-foam,
Æneas's sword to bury in the loam,
And see the eagle of her plumage shorn!

A Titan born again, he would bestride
The Alps, as would the sons of Earth have laid
Pelion on Olympus to dethrone
The majesty of Jove. Black fate denied
The meed of daring, fickle Fortune played
A wanton's part to see his power o'erthrown.

NAPOLEON AT PLYMOUTH

ENGLAND! He sought thy hearth, a fallen foe,
That man of men whose unforgotten name
Is as a star upon the brow of fame
To shine through ages with a brighter glow.
Unbent beneath the burden of his woe,
Nor heeding fortune's vengeance, mankind's blame,
A trustful guest unto thy hearth he came:
A Conqueror by a conquered world laid low!

Oh! 'twas a precious hour, could but thy hand,
Swayed by the nobler impulse of thy heart,
Have welcomed him! Fate willed it not to be,
And Time withdrew his gift. Now see him stand
On yonder sea-girt rock alone, apart,
By suffering raised to immortality!

NAPOLEON AT ST. HELENA

HE stands—an eagle gazing on the skies,
Wings fluttering still with impotent desire
To soar again where yonder orb of fire,
The sun of glory—mocking vision—flies.
He'd soar again, but fate relentless ties
His conquering talons to that rocky spire,
His sea-girt tomb. In clouds of passion dire
Fame, power, glory pass before his eyes.

Ah! never more on world-wide flights intent,
Shall spread those wings by jealous nations bound,
Who forged the chain while trembling at his power!
His conquests fade, but that which Nature lent,
The rage of strife within his soul profound,—
His breath bequeaths to Europe—fatal dower!

DEATH OF NAPOLEON

CHAINED to his rock the dying hero lies,
A martyr's bliss and agony in his heart,
And darkness—till the spirit's lightnings dart
A radiance through the mist. Before his eyes
The Conqueror's triumphs fade, and Glory flies.
Peace crowns that crownless brow whose inmost part
Throbs with expiring might. New visions start,
Of new, peace-guarded worlds 'neath calmer skies.

Around, the bleak crags moan, as moans the wind
Shot through by forkéd flames; the thunder roars;
Earth shudders as though conquering legions trod
Her bruiséd breast again. Then, unconfined,
Above the tempest's flight his spirit soars,
And the Earth-shaker stands before his God.

WRITTEN IN A LIFE OF NAPOLEON

WHEN prostrate Europe trembled at thy name,
And kingdoms were thy footstools, who could deem
Thy Star inconstant, who that saw it gleam
O'er conquering hosts that did thy might proclaim?
Then was thy power greater than thy fame;
Then more than mortal thou; the world did seem
A gilded toy to thy ambition's dream—
To win or lose without remorse or shame.

Great in thy fall, that Titan's doom was thine,
Whose suffering scorned, obedient to his vow,
The Thunderer's bolt and Phoebus' fiery dart
When envious fear and jealous wrath divine
Chained him upon a bleak rock's rugged brow,
With Jove's grim eagle tearing out his heart.

VICTORIA REGINA

VICE ill could brook the scorn of virtue's eyes
In realms that owned the blessings of her reign.
To salve all wounded hearts in grief and pain,
The Mother Queen exalted nature's ties.
O'er regions vast 'neath other stars and skies,
Right strove with might the mastery to gain;
In Indian groves and Afric's torrid plain
Ambition learned by patience to be wise.

Right was the crowning glory of her heart,
Eternal in its worth by God's command,—
A symbol of His consecrated power.
By faith inspired, she played her destined part;
Ne'er raised but for some grace her sceptred hand
As calm in trial as in triumph's hour.

IN MEMORIAM

The Late Nizam Mir Mahbub Ali Khan

A RADIANT soul eclipsed awhile with care,
Soared back again unto the realm of light,
And left behind a day that seemed like night.
Himself of higher destiny aware,
All heaven and earth it was his lot to share;
A king in pomp, at heart an eremite,
His silent spirit soared from height to height
In search of good in realms of purer air.

He ruled by love, his sceptre of command
Was but a symbol of his heart of love,
By which the allegiance of all hearts he won.
A heart of pity and an open hand—
These were the blessings dowered from above
As his true kingdom ere his day was done.

Died in September, 1911.

TO H.E.H. THE NIZAM.

Presented on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee,
February, 1937

ENTHRONED in hearts of love and loyalty,
Crowned with exalted virtues that combine
With temporal power the attributes divine—
Mercy and grace with might and majesty;
Be such thy station, such God's gifts to thee
Whose rule should image forth His will benign!
May thus, through thee, the glory of thy line
Be voiced abroad in lands beyond the sea!
Firm on the righteous path thy fathers trod,
Staunch in their faith, long may thy hands sustain
The trust by Heaven vouchsafed, with wisdom's art,
Till time proclaim "His reign was blessed by God!"
'Tis thine to look above, and thine to gain
By love dominion o'er each faithful heart.

MAHATMA GANDHI

MAN'S highest good this heartless age ignores
And folly fain would scorn life's holiest need;
Hatred let loose proclaims the villain's creed,
And love in vain the aid of Heaven implores.
To prove the power by which the spirit soars
Above life's ills to claim the victor's meed,
Made strong by faith and from ambition freed—
A task by Prophets honoured—it was yours.

God gave you light to seek the higher way
Afar from evil; you were of His host;
Not yours the light but His that gave your heart
Divine assurance through the darkest day.
His breath that guards the soldier at his post,
Inspires the saint to play the martyr's part.

This is an acrostic.

TURKEY UNDER MUSTAFA KAMAL

EVEN as a lion, while full many a dart
Aimed at his breast, around him hurtling flies,
Grim-couchant near his sandy lair he lies,
Poised for the spring while chafing at each smart,
Until the fated moment when he'd start
With horrent mane and vengeance-flashing eyes,
And with a roar that thunders to the skies,
In one fell swoop be at the hunter's heart.

E'en so awhile in grim repose she lay,
In patience brooding o'er her dismal woes
That seemed to dim the glory of her past.
Then came her man of power to rule the day;
He bade her rise triumphant o'er her foes
And wrest from Fate the honours that shall last.

PALACE OF THE CÆSARS, ROME

I TREAD on desolation ; 'tis the home
Of pomp and power and luxury and pride;
But, where are they who heaven and earth defied,—
The haughty masters of Imperial Rome?
No gilded roofs beneath heaven's lofty dome,
No marble floors where trailing weeds now hide
A shattered frieze or column laid beside
Some sculptured relic slumbering in the loam!

Unsceptred Cæsars, reft of robe and crown,—
The purple of its regal splendour shorn—
Still hover here, and sad Augustus' shade,
With hollow eyes fixt on her past renown,
May have a vision of a Rome reborn
Of might that sleeps in monuments decayed.

CAPITOLIUM FULGENS (*Horace*)

THE Capitol stands; but greatness is no more.
Unheard the haughty voice that erst decreed
The doom of Carthage; Briton, Gaul nor Mede
Dreads now the coming of the storm that bore
The conquering eagles to his frozen shore.
Gone all the pomp that glorified the greed
Of conquests, triumphs, spoils—the victor's meed,
The victim's chains that vanquished chieftains wore!

Yet in her dust there sleeps the long-past might
Of field and forum in its sleep profound
Of twice ten hundred years. It will again
Thrill through the heart of Europe, day and night,
With clang of mustering arms and trumpet's sound
To memorise Bellona's ancient reign!

ROMA FUIT

TIME'S chariot-wheels have long since travelled o'er
The dismal round by ruthless Fate decreed.
No longer shines the Capitol; The Mede
Might scorn the arms he learned to shun before.
Rome's mighty heart, the Forum, is no more;
Her relics of past grandeur now but feed
The stranger's gaze, where many a nameless weed
Trails o'er the earth that Cæsar's palace bore!

Where are the relics of her pomp and pride?
And is there aught that still may rule the Earth?
Ay, 'tis the wisdom that once graced her throne:
The heart* of light whose memory will abide
To give regenerate power a nobler birth—
The heart whose might was pure-eyed faith alone.

*Marcus Aurelius.

POMPEII

THE sun has sunk; the evening air around
Is filling with dark shadows and is still;
Night is descending on Vesuvius' hill—
A gasping Titan writhing on the ground.
The agony of ages, tense, profound;
The breath of desolation, drear and chill;
The voices of dead centuries—all fill
The heaving silence with a mournful sound.

Time's breath has swept away dead hopes and joys;
Glory and might that Rome's proud heart did own
Are crumbling monuments his foot destroys;
And o'er them all gray Ruin waves her wings
To scatter wide, unhonoured and unknown,
The dust of Empire and the bones of Kings.

This and the sonnets on Rome were written in commemoration of his visit in 1896.—*Ed.*

Miscellaneous Poems

Glimpses

Faith and Chivalry

MY dream was of a gallant Knight,
True, gentle, just and brave
In love and war, in feast and fight—
Whose sword was drawn to save
Beauty and Truth and Liberty
And helpless Right from Wrong,
To guard in time of jeopardy
The weak against the strong.

My dream was of a Lady fair,
With heaven in her eyes
That flashed upon the evening air
The glory of the skies.
Her heart's blood, pity's trembling tear
Her touch a balm to woe;
Her soothing voice to sorrow dear,
As listening angels know!

With these, of many a high emprise
It was my lot to dream,
Till Knighthood's heart and Beauty's eyes
Commingling in one gleam,
Did slay the Dragon in his den,
The Wizard in his dome:
The vice and crime enthroned by men
In Error's ancient home.

With vows renewed, the Knight and Dame
To other fields passed on,
Where far aloft a mystic flame
'Twixt earth and heaven shone.
They hailed with humbled heart and head
The Temple of the Lord,
And round the holy altar spread
The trophies of their sword.

Crusader, Templar, Errant-Knight,
Grey Palmer, Hermit lone—
'Twas thus man's spirit sought the light
That beckoned from the Unknown
And bade that noblest deeds be done
By noble hearts and free.
Thus man his proudest honours won
By Faith and Chivalry.

As Pride in glittering armour dight,
As Faith in Palmer's weeds,
Sought Knighthood from the hand of Right
The prize of dauntless deeds.
Thus in the Knight the Hermit see;
For pride was but a veil,
And valour hid humility
In sack-cloth 'neath the mail.

Noorjehan—Wife of the Emperor Jehangir

LIGHT of the world! Was it thy beauty bright
 That made the world re-echo with thy fame?
Wast thou the only star in eastern night
To fill the East with thy resounding name?

When He thy Maker made thee passing fair,
And shaped thy form with every charm to shine,
Did He not give thee more than beauty's share
To fill thy soul with impulses divine?

So, when thou didst adorn a monarch's throne
As queen, who wast a humble maiden born,
It was thy touch which made a monarch own
The grace of kings which he did seem to scorn.

God gave thee grace his spirit to redeem
From touch of mortal grossness and its harms;
He gave thee Light, which from thy soul did stream
Above the soft allurement of thy charms.

Some mystic glow, that burst through Beauty's veil,
Dispelled the shadows of his spirit's night,
And then he hailed thee, as all men did hail,
Light of the World—a world of living light!

The Wish of a Moghul Princess*

NOT beneath a shining dome
    Raised on jewelled arches high,
But where gentle breezes roam
Free beneath the sunny sky,
Be the everlasting home
Where my weary limbs shall lie.

What needs Art with cunning hand
God's own green turf to adorn?
Rain-clouds passing o'er the land,
And the dewy breath of morn,
These will strew upon the sand
Sweet wild herbs and flowers new-born.

Dust that kindred dust encloses
Asks no monumental stone;
Virgin lillies, blushful roses,
These will sing in joyous tone:
" Here beneath our bloom reposes
One who sought His love alone."

Let no mortal o'er my lot
Shed a tear or heave a sigh;
Love will seek and find the spot
Where my hidden relics lie,—
By all hearts save love's forgot,
Hid from all save God on high.

* Sister of Aurangzebe.

Mustapha Kamal

THE victim of his monarch's hate,
The plaything of a wayward fate,
From lowest depths he was to rise
To make his fallen nation great.

A hunted outlaw who could dare
To turn on fate and scorn despair;
An iron heart and iron hand
That would his country's wrongs repair;

A heart relentless to be strong,
A stormy will that swept along
In triumph over friend and foe—
Heedless alike of right and wrong.

A hero fired with patriot pride,
Who scheming Europe's powers defied
When Turkey at their mercy lay
And hope within all hearts had died.

A bearer of the Prophet's name,
His darkest deeds God's mercy claim,
Who gave him power to save once more
A Muslim nation's honour, fame.

(Died on the 10th of November, 1938.)

A Moorish Chief

to

General Franco

I HEARD the call of Alcazar;
Across the sands it came from far:
"Ye warriors of Moorish strain,
Sprung from the blood that ruled in Spain!
If still within your hearts abide
The patriot's love, the hero's pride,
Remember Andalusia's fame—
The crown of Arab's glorious name!

Ye warriors true, whose faithful sword
Ne'er failed to guard your plighted word,
Come forth; it is your country's call;
Come, guard each ancient tower and wall!
Come, save the Crescent and the Cross!
Come, save from jeopardy and loss
Their honour in this bitter strife
Which seeks to wreck both faith and life!"

I heard, mine aged heart afire
With indignation, anguish, ire;
I heard—mine ancient blood aflame
With expectation turned to shame

To think that Faith and Chivalry,
The sacred birthright of the free—
To save the bleeding heart of Spain,
Should cry to Europe all in vain.

God guards His own; that bleeding heart,
Though pierced with Satan's poisoned dart,
Was like its hero's, undismayed.
What need of Europe's niggard aid
When Franco rose, the Leader bold,
The Chosen Amir whose hand did hold
The sword of Faith to save from loss
For Faith the Crescent and the Cross?

My beard is grey, mine arm is weak,
And yet this eager heart doth seek
To battle, Franco, by thy side—
Franco, thy nation's Guard and Guide—
To see the ranks of Satan yield
To Godly ranks the stricken field,
Until the broken heart of Spain
Once more its ancient faith regain.

O strong of heart, and strong of hand!
To thee I send my chosen band,
True Muslim hearts, of naught afraid—
Each trusty as his Moorish blade.
To us a sister nation's need
Is as our own, whose will is deed.
To us the sister Faiths are one
Wherever shines the rolling sun.

Religion

MAN'S heart, which his Creator sees,
Is as a thronéd seat
Where all sublime philosophies
And all religions meet.

Seek not another's faith to blame,
Who worships God as One
Supreme o'er all, whatever name
They give Him 'neath the sun.

Religion is no idle rite;
'Tis worship in the heart,
Where faith reveals the hidden Light
Whose subtle rays impart

Their wondrous grace to earth and sky
And life to lifeless sod.
All life below, all life on high
Is of the breath of God.

Freedom

O FREEDOM never begged or bought!
An instinct thou and not a thought;
Thou'rt seldom found when thou art sought.

The birthright of the Valiant thou,
The altar of the Patriot's vow;
Thy symbols shine upon thy brow.

Thy creed is Honour's faith sublime
And Valour in its virtuous prime;
Thy blade is never soiled with crime.

Thy laurel crown is for the Brave,
Whose might is mercy that can save.
The Martyr greets thee from the grave.

The writing on the wall*

SEE'ST thou with pride thine Empire rise?
Mark its decline and fall!
There stands before thy blinded eyes
The writing on the wall!

How vain the pomp of wealth and power,
The pride of sceptred sway!
Thy life is but a shortlived hour,
Thine Empire's life a day!

---

* For Mussolini, Hitler and such like.—*Ed.*

A Lost Leader

NOT him but our own loss we mourn,
Who great in soul, with faith endowed,
Could teach men's conscience to be proud
Of right through trials calmly borne.

A brave and righteous leader sent
By Providence men's hearts to guide;
Not his the voice of power and pride,
But of great deeds and high intent.

In every uttered word his breath
Flashed forth a pure heart's truth as light;
He saw the dawn beyond the night—
And chose the way that conquers death.

When God resumes what He bestows,
And hopes lie withered in their prime,
As wrecks amid the wrecks of time—
The purpose of His will, who knows?

We know not; all that knowledge lends
Are but faint shadows on a screen;
Behind, the Master's hand unseen
Shapes all their movements to His ends.

The Elect

COUNTLESS the gifts that fate bestows on thee:
High hopes and firm assurance, courage high.
In serving every righteous cause thou'lt be.
Not faint of heart, but every wrong defy.

Thou'lt rise from height to loftier height to see
A fairer prospect widening to the sky—
Morn as the light of Joy o'er lawn and lea,
And sunset as the Hope that will not die!

Nor doubt nor dread will daunt thee, thou'lt defy
Despair with power of Faith and Constancy.
Eager for good, thy heart will ne'er belie
Self-guiding Truth that Knowledge brings to thee.

Move on thy chosen path, unhampered, free;
Unfaltering be thy steps, thy gaze fixed high;
Knowledge inspired will thus reveal to thee
Heaven in thy heart, God's light before thine eye.

A Reminder

LIFE is with threatening dangers fraught;
The path of Duty's rugged, steep:
Above, the starry realm of hope;
Below, the dark and stormy deep!

Who toils with patience up the height,
With soul untired, undaunted will;
With Faith to hold his trembling hand,
With Truth to guard his footsteps still—

What though with faltering steps he move,
He needs must reach the promised goal,
Where Honour binds the victor's brows,
And Virtue crowns the hero's soul.

But he who loiters by the way,
Attracted by some foolish toy,
Or wearied by the vain pursuit
Of some fond whim, some fickle joy,—

Not his the nerve, nor will to brave
Unmoved the fitful gales that blow;
His tottering footsteps leave their hold,
He's hurled into the gulf below!

* TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

JUST in all thoughts and deeds, sincere and true
  And human for the good of humankind;
We hope to see e'en such a man in you,
A type so rare in this grim world to find.

High placed you are, and for our country's good;
Far from the tumult of all selfish strife
Rightly you guide all hearts to brotherhood,
Love and goodwill and peace—the boon of life.

A task by God ordained is on you laid—
Laborious, irksome and with danger fraught:
Ne'er falter in your faith, but calm and staid
E'en when opposed by wrong, fight as you've fought!

Hold faith with all, with love to guide your heart;
Encourage trust by keeping troth with heed;
Revere the sanctities of life as part,
Under God's will, of a true patriot's creed.

* On his birthday 14th Nov., 1954.

To My Sisters

YOU came to me robed in my boyhood's dream,
And from my soul you cannot pass away.
A promised joy, still like a golden beam
You light the shadows of my closing day.
O may you never learn to own the sway
Of fears that overcloud the worldly mind!
Be yours through life the tranquil joys that stay,
The thoughts and deeds that leave no sting behind—
As pure as morning flowers whose breath perfumes the wind!

Your childish hands took from Life's rising morn
Its brimming cup of many-coloured joy.
Time held no terrors, with each hour was born
Some fresh delight whose sweetness did not cloy.
Each thought a wish, each wish without alloy
Some angel bade in sweet fulfilment end!
No selfish care could childhood's peace destroy,
Nor envy sting, nor hate its poison lend
Unto the heart that owned in every heart a friend.

A holier peace—the chastened spirit's dower—
Now falls on you to solace and delight;
And when around your path night's shadows lower
May heaven-eyed Faith be still your lodestar bright,
And honour, truth and love and grace unite
To guard your steps along life's steep incline!
Fear not the dark, but follow still the light
Whose rays along your lonely walk will shine;
And look to Him who fills pure hearts with breath divine.

In shine and shade our faltering steps have trod
The long and narrow path that leads to Right;
Our blended souls have sought the grace of God
And moved through life as ever in His sight.

The world we leave behind is wrapped in night,
The world before us holds the promised day;
And life's horizon, slowly waxing bright,
Brings visions near, in dazzling long array,
As from an opening Heaven that once seemed far away.
Those years are shadows that we left behind;
Regret not that you'll never see them more.
Their choicest gifts in memory enshrined
Will still be ours upon the farther shore,
Where Love shall live, that kindred spirits bore
Each unto each on earth to make them one.
Look not behind, 'tis ours to look before
For full fruition of the life begun,
And hail the coming Morn beyond the setting Sun!

Parting Message to a Friend

NAY, do not bid me touch the string
Whose notes once pleased your partial ear,
To sing as in life's joyous Spring
Light songs that Beauty loves to hear.

When Joy is dead and Springtime flown,
And leaf and blossom all are sere,
Frail buds that withered ere half-blown
Revive not in th' autumnal year.

Hushed is the lyre, its strains no more
With rising hope's bright raptures swell;
The eager heart that throbbed of yore
To every passing breeze to tell

Of young Love's longings and its glow
Is now a hermit in his cell;
Would fain forget life's joy and woe,
And dreams that it remembers well.

The Nizam's Silver Jubile—e1937

SERENE we stood when all around
In every land was stir and strife;
Love ruled our hearts, and faith profound
Vain conflicts did not mar our life;
Each hour its grateful tribute brought:
Remembrance of our happy lot.

Just in our claim of Truth and Right,
Undaunted still, and undismayed,
Brave in our patience, calm despite
Ill-boding fear midst hopes delayed—
Let us stand firm and face the light,
Enduring all that God may send,
Expecting triumph in the end!

Acrostic.

In Memoriam

M. Pickthall

SOLDIER of faith! True servant of Islam!
To thee 'twas given to quit the shades of night
And onward move, aye onward into light,
Thy soul confirmed, thy heart assured and calm

Thou hast achieved what was ordained for thee;
Now take thy rest. For thee we will not mourn.
Thy form has vanished but thy spirit's borne
Up to the Highest claiming victory

O'er superstition, falsehood, darkness, death,
And all the ills that Islam bade thee shun.
The hosts of Heaven acclaim what thou hast won—
The perfect Peace—the promised meed of Faith.

(Died 1936).

Sarojini Naidu

SPIRIT ever ardent, ever true!
    Aloft you've flown bright visions to pursue!
Righteous amidst the fierce turmoil of life,
Opposed to wrong, allaying hurtful strife,
Just in all claims that unto right belong,
In facing ills you never stooped to wrong;
Ne'er bent the knee to haughty power to rise—
Intent on Service as life's noblest prize.

Ne'er in that heart of yours was guile or hate–
A poet's glowing heart with love elate;
Intrepid, you pursued your chosen course,
Disdaining selfish craft and artful force;
Undazed by fame—the promised gift of fate.

(Died March 2, 1949).

Acrostic.

Mohammad Ali Jinnah

MASTER of righteous will and daring deed
Of self-devotion in the cause of Right,
High-souled and steadfast in the hour of need—
A selfless toiler walking in God's light!

'Mongst hostile factions eager to seize power,
Misled by neither fear nor discontent,
Alone you stood self-poised and did not lower,
Despite their threats and frowns, your high intent.

A man of vision, hopeful, undismayed,
Longsighted, bold your projects to pursue,
Inspired by Faith, of naught but God afraid;
Just in your thoughts and deeds—a Muslim true.

Immune from envious malice, free from hate,
Not choosing wrongful means right ends to gain;
Above deceit, ne'er abject, ne'er elate,
Honoured by all, long did you thus remain.

(Died September 1948).

Acrostic.

Abdullah Yusuf Ali

AY, you have played in life a noble part
Before your God by service of mankind;
Desiring nought but good within your heart,
Undaunted by the ills before, behind.

Life raised your upward gaze from height to height,
Like those who toiled of yore in Islam's cause
And sacrificed all earthly gain for right—
Heroes revering God in Nature's laws.

Your task on earth fulfilled, your toils are o'er;
Unblemished stands your record *here*, and *there!*
Serene your soul abides for evermore,
Untouched by vain regret, and haunting care.

Favoured of God for faithful service done,
Around you lie, mid memories of the past,
Life, Light and Love as gifts from Heaven won—
Immutable, eternal, infinite, vast!

(Died December, 1953).

Acrostic.

SPARKS

Not all the Poet's in his art;
To know the Poet—find his heart!

WHAT though but a lonely dreamer,
Let me have consoling dreams.
Let me dream to find the Real
In the heart of all that seems!

*

I see the world receding,
It fades upon my sight.
It's passing into darkness
As I into The Light!

*

I seek nor wealth nor power,
They come from One on high,
When from each star and flower
I hear the song " 'Tis I!"

*

Each day I lose upon this Earth,
Counts tow'rd Eternity.
It dies to have another birth;
It goes to wait for me!

*

'Twixt me and all that God has made
Life is the link divine.
I call it Love when it outflows
To other hearts from mine.

*

I look beyond the morrow,
No sun to rise and set!
No fleeting joy nor sorrow,
Fond hope, nor vain regret!

I never stooped to beg of man
What God knew how to give.
'Twas His to teach a nobler plan
And I have learned to *live*!

*

That peace of soul I may attain,
I count all worldly loss as gain.
With heart at peace 'mid worldly strife
I find my place in Nature's life.

*

I gaze on heaven and earth,
And see the planets roll;
But Beauty and its worth
I find within my soul.

*

I smile on Fate, and stand my ground,
And turn each wrong to right,
And thus I turn the tables round—
Choke sorrow with delight!

*

It fades—the painted pageant
Of all that I have seen;
And now there lies before me
A grey unpictured scene.

*

What shall I leave behind me—
A word, a deed, a name?
Who cares? Were there not talkers
Who talked before I came?

*

When from myself I look around,
And gaze on earth and sky,
Uncounted forms of life reveal
Two beings: He and I.

The centre of His universe,
Was I ordained to be—
A conscious atom round which lies
His work, His deity?

*

Ordained by One Who sees and knows
The hidden and the manifest,
For me this life of joys and woes
Is but a trial and a test.

*

I take the good and ill of Life—
All, all alike with grateful heart.
Thus peace is mine amidst all strife
And vanquished sorrows soon depart.

*

To look beyond this earthly life
A sight unto my Soul is given,
A consciousness that makes me feel
Our real life doth image Heaven.

*

Who can unmake or render vain
The life that once has been?
We'll live in Him Whose powers ordain
The unseen and the seen.

*

Let love still be the spirit's quest
For Beauty as Life's utmost best:
A mystery—a glimpse—a gleam
Shot through the vesture of Life's Dream.

Waifs

Independence

A SNAIL, within its shell it lay
Secure and snugly curled;
Just peeped into the world to say
"I do not need the world."

To the Modern Man

Your world is moving fast,
It moves beyond my ken.
I know not what it holds—
Whether machines or men.

Philanthropy

Look at the world from far
To love your kind.
You'll see it as a Star,
And man as Mind.

Reminiscence

A world before, a scene behind;
Here stand we—I and you.
Love sought the false, and love was blind;
Let Faith now find the true!

Modern Love

Immortal Love! Art thou a myth
To please the Poet's mind?
Say, art thou quite successful with
Our modern womankind?

Optimism

All men are good-and-bad;
Treat all as friends;
But keep yourself aloof—
All trouble ends!

Altruism

In what we build comes first our gain,
And then another's good,—
An Empire or an Aeroplane,
Glaxo or Mellin's Food!

Science and Faith

The man of Science claims the earth;
The man of Science claims the skies.
But where the Truth of truths has birth—
The man of Science quickly dies!

The Star, a spheréd mystery,
The beauty of the Rose—
The foolish Poet but *admires*,
The man of Science *knows*.

He'll tell you how the Rose was made,
Whence Stars obtain their light.
He'll tell what chemical manures
Will make your Rose more bright!

Practical Advice

'Black Care behind the horseman rides'
Says Horace with regret.
The horseman need not look behind,
And he will soon forget.

Power and Politics

God said 'Let Power be fashioned
By Soldiers and by Sailors,
And robes of Constitution
By Parliamentary Tailors!'

Superman

There stands our little 'Super-man'
In Nature's roofless school.
The Master asks him what he can—
And names him 'Super-fool!'

Egoism

Dear Ego, wouldst thou higher rise—
To knock thy head against the skies?
Yes, thou wilt knock it surely—but
Against the lintel of thy hut!

Straight

I cannot say that he is straight—
A straight line he may be.
Between two points, the false and true,
He lies most evenly!

House building

Not satisfied with earth and sky,
I build myself a house;
And I forget that when I die
'Twill be for Bat and Mouse.

Our Paper World

Man's soul was spent to build this world—
A noisy Babel-tower.
'Twas built—and from its towers are hurled
Journals that souls devour!

The New Creed

"Thy neighbours love"—with thy best hate!
Our old-world love is out of date;
It was at best a feeble thing;
We want a creed that has a sting.

Humorous Verse

My Sister's Cat

MEW'ST thou, "I am your sister's cat,
And scorn to look at mouse or rat."
Sure, one of Macbeth's witches three
Has taught thee all thy devilry.

Nor milk nor meat, nor cake nor tart
But succumbs to thy native art.
By subtle art thou mak'st them thine—
And we are left to peek and pine.

Thou feignest sickness; 'tis a trick
Brings special diet for the sick:
Milk pudding, pish-pash, slops and stews,
And blood-producing liver juice.

When vengeful plans are in my mind
Thou leav'st my vengeance far behind;
Before I turn thou'rt on the roof—
And I stand solemnly aloof!

There is a paper made for flies,
In which a special virtue lies;
A cat may rue it on its tail,
It seldom has been known to fail.

But I will leave thee to thy fate,
And pray it may not come too late.
Within some dog, our pains to save,
Thou yet mayst find a timely grave.

Then that same dog will bear with glee
My tablet to thy memory;
And when he is inclined to laugh
He'll read aloud thine epitaph.

Ode to a Bat

DESCEND, O Muse of starry night!
And guide my pen that fain would write
What ne'er was writ or sung before
By ancient bard of wizard lore
And magic might.

Time was in solemn mood we sat
And strung the lyre to owl and cat;
But now 'tis time to celebrate—
And surely, better soon than late—
The skinny Bat.

In dark Cimmerian caverns born,
And taught to shun the light of morn,
It darts at dusk across my sight,
A fledgeless bird, a houseless sprite,
A thing forlorn!

Forlorn! The sound of that dread word
Makes *me* feel like a leathery bird,
And straightway to the roof I cling,
And meditate the song I sing,
And sing unheard.

And thou, when thou dost cease to fly
Thou clingest to some coign on high,
Suspended from a rafter brown,
Thy downside up and upside down
And head awry.

Thee here a vagrant's fortune brings;
From mutual faith our friendship springs;
But Oh! I pray thee, do not pour
On me an undesired store
Of nameless things.

Nor do thou, when the night is dark
And village dogs begin to bark,
And all the air around is still,
Sign on my sheets of Turkey Mill
Thy Water-mark!

Whate'er thou art, or bird or sprite—
First-born of Chaos or of Night—
I'll be thy pupil, learn from thee
To mock at grim Adversity,
'Gainst Fate to fight.

To A Feathered Poacher

IN spite of your faults I do like you, my friend,
With your black cap and red tuft at either end;
With your knowing eye and your plumage sleek
And your pert assurance which is much like cheek.
And your movements too I do like to see,
So impudent, easy, and careless and free.
Despising my presence, you come and you go,
As though not a bit did you care to know
To whom all the trees in this garden belong;
I smile at your knowledge of right and wrong.
Now from fruit to fruit do you flutter and flit,
But in no one place do you care to sit.
When you pick at a fruit whether ripe or unripe
With a chirp and a twit from your little pipe;
And whether you like my hard peaches well
Or find the figs sweeter, I cannot tell;
When you try your beak on the pomegranate rind
For your teeth I have often a wish unkind!
Why are you always in such needless haste,
And like the unripest fruit to taste?
Then you leave it behind with a little hole,
And you tempt me to think that you have no soul.
And sometimes you look as though trying to sing
But 'tis only a pip-pip that out you bring.
By your manner you say, 'O I could if I would'
But I've reason to think that you would if you could.
When the livelong day in my orchard you roam,
How your family circle must miss you at home!
You're so seldom at home and so oft on the wing,
That your wife must think you a selfish old thing!
Do you never once think when my berries you eat
That the children at home must be crying for meat?
If my fruit that you ate had been lawful prize—
You would now have been half a turkey in size!
No ill-will I bear, you may do what you will;
As an old retainer I must feed you still.

Our Midnight Visitor

O THOU Minerva's favoured fowl,
Serenely contemplative owl!
O feathered sage beloved of her,
Lone hermit, mute philosopher!
I wake to hear thy bodeful cry
What time the moon is riding high,
Surrounded by her courtier throng
Of stars yon azure heights along.

I harken to thy bodeful cry
And vaguely fear disaster nigh.
What mystic visions of the night
Reveal dark secrets to my sight,
And show in night's Cimmerian gloom
Unveiled, the mystery of doom!
And yet thy note that numbs the air,
Is patience mellowing despair.

Say, does thy calm philosophy
Disdain the heart's keen agony?
Each patient pause, each measured oo-m,
So like the minute-guns of doom,
Mourn they life's fleeting pomp and pride
And glories that will not abide?
Grave morals point, sad lessons teach
As ne'er did priest or layman preach?

The sad note in thy warning cry
Stirs thoughts and feelings deep and high.
The Nightingale's rapt melody
Is joy and sorrow's revelry;

The morning minstrel, lyric Lark
Venting his throat in many a spark
Of light-like music, is to thee
A little chick of low degree.

Let Keats' and Shelley's raptures hail
The Skylark and the Nightingale;
But thou, whose graver notes control
The deeper currents of the soul,
Thou art to me, time-honoured Owl,
A very Browning amongst fowl.
Thy mystery I fain would learn;
Take thou this poem in return.

PART IV

Translations

H.E.H. The Nizam's Ghuzals

Some Specimens

COME and fill the empty wine-cup,
  Fill it high with roseate wine
Ere the rolling skies above us
  With an altered colour shine !

From the festal lamp has vanished
  All its heart-consuming fire ;
And the fated Moth's cold ashes
  Soon will quit the funeral pyre !

From the desolate home of Leila
  As the wand'ring breezes blow,
On the lonely tomb of Majnoon
  Mark the lamp's expiring glow !

How long shall the heart of Yearning
  And Love's ever-wakeful eyes,
Blood-shot, keep their nightly vigils,
  Like yon stars upon the skies ?

But O joy ! My love has conquered
  And my suit will now advance.
For Love's art has slowly, surely
  Countervailed her magic glance !

Witness those soft eyes of languor,
  Heavy as with blent delight
Of remembered love and gladness
  And the wine of yesternight !

What though from the garden, Osman,
  Spring has flown on hasty wings ?
Here we have the circling wine-cup,
  And its wonted joy it brings.

LOVERS' meeting, hearts united—
  This alone can bring delight.
Till then nought can soothe my sorrow,
  Nought can make my burden light!

New to Love is new to Sorrow—
  No such heart can voice Love's pain.
'Tis the heart that's steeped in anguish
  That can teach lips to complain!

But Love's will must curb Love's madness,
  Greater than the madness be;
For 'twere shame O heart, to wander
  Lost in Love's wild ecstasy!

Free thy wings, my captive Spirit,
  Seek thy native haunts again!
Spring invites thee, it were torture
  In this prison to remain.

Life! 'tis but the short-lived union
  Of frail atoms that combine.
Death! 'tis but their timely severance
  When their vital powers decline!

Spare, O spare Love's tender flower;
  Leave it yet awhile to bloom.
It will serve to shed its beauty
  O'er some nameless lover's tomb!

Osman, on the page of Nature
  God's own hand hath set His seal.
Mark the blossom on the dustheap—
  So does God His love reveal!

OH, to see the heart of Being,
  Where Life's hidden secret lies!
Come, Immortal Love, and help me
  Tear the veil from off mine eyes!

Truth in love my heart has cherished,
  Faith has been its joy and pride;
And amidst Love's aspirations
  These have ever been my guide.

Thus my heart in Beauty's tresses—
  In those curling locks of thine
Reads the riddle of the longings
  That around its core entwine!

Love has made me mad, and madness
  Knows no bound 'twixt Right and Wrong
Who can curb the deathless passions
  That unto the Soul belong?

Oh, the endless nights of yearning,
  Endless dreams of Beauty's hair,
Days of absence, days of anguish,
  Nights again of wild despair!

Might not thus two beings mingle,
  That were sundered and apart?
Osman, see them reunited
  In the mirror of thy heart!

NOT the bournes of earth and heaven
  Bound my spirit's daring flight;
Grant, O God, unto its vision
  Boundless space and endless height!

Cagèd long and lone, it flutters,
  Beating 'gainst the prison bars;
Give it freedom, let it wander
  To its home beyond the stars!

Cruel hands have made it captive;
  Pain and sorrow mar its life;
It would soar on aerial pinions
  And escape from woe and strife.

It would seek some lofty eyrie;
  But, alas, what nest on high
Can avail when winged lightnings
  Lurk within the azure sky?

Nay, not here, where all must perish—
  Earth below and sky above—
Can it find a home eternal
  Save within the heart of Love!

O rebellious Self unconquered!
  O ye passions unsubdued!
How ye thwart the higher nature
  And the Spirit's holier mood!

Ever with a sateless longing
  Osman's eager heart is rife,—
For the Spring once found by Khizar,
  For the fount of deathless Life!

I'M in life a living legend
  Of some sad heart's secret pain ;
I'm of yearning hearts the minstrel—
  Of such hearts as yearn in vain !

Final stage in Life's long journey,
  Whence the destined goal appears,
I'm the sole remaining relic
  Of the Caravan of years !

All our being's deepest secrets
  In my silence stand confest :
Though I'm tongueless yet my meaning
  Is by magic power exprest !

I'm a symbol to the living
  Of that which shall be no more ;
Frail memorial, if Heav'n spare me,
  Of those that have gone before !

In my life I am the measure
  Of the truth affection lends ;
I'm on earth a test and trial
  Of the vaunted faith of friends !

I'm the melody of Sorrow
  In the heart of Silence born ;
I'm the dirge's mournful wailing
  O'er some wretch's grave forlorn !

When from Life I've vanished nameless,
  Thus the simple tale relate :
Osman proved the spite of fortune
  And the tyranny of fate !

Rajghat, Delhi

NOT void of active grace life's destined round,
Where youth and age with varied gifts abound.

What though some man of saintly thought and deed
By the fell hand of some foul villain bleed ?

Hard was his task to tend his flock with care ;
Such skill falls not to every pastor's share ;

Nor every face that on life's canvas glows
Such magic of the Master's pencil shows !

Lo ! from yon clouds descends the gentle rain,
The lawn revives, the garden blooms again.

List to the songbird's softly warbled strain—
Sweet sounds of joy, not plaintive notes of pain !

So lives he in both worlds, a living breath—
Gandhi, a soul immune from touch of death !

LO ! The birth of Lord Jesus, the Saviour brings
The season of rejoicing to his flock
Today !
And a pen is held in a Hand Unseen

That traces the words of the Bible
Today !

And the Holy Scripture can throw a light
On the deepest mystery of life
Today !

A miracle in sooth as a witness to Truth
Is the birth of the Heavenborn Child
Today !

And the joy of the Holy Wine is to Osman
As the fragrance of Spring to the garden
Today !

COME! This is the festive Season,
Joyous with its flowers and wine;
All around from floating rain clouds
Showers descend of Grace Divine.

While the clustered buds are opening,
Nargis looks with wondering eyes;
While the beauteous Rose enfolded
In the bud still slumbering lies.

Comes the Book, it beareth witness:
"Son of Mariam stands alone"!
With what joy the buds are bursting
Into colours yet unknown!

Hold awhile thy hand, Cup-bearer,
From yon brimful cup of wine.
Lo! the drinker's overpowered
By some mystic draught divine!

Whose the gift, December knows not—
Whose the hand the beaker filled.
Taste thou from that cup, O Osman!
Of the wine of rose distilled.

Now is heard the joyous tidings
Of the coming of the Spring.
Now, behold! The cage is opened
And each bird is on the wing.

Turns unto the height of heaven,
Rapt with wonder, every flower
When the Mother greets the Prophet,
Hails Messiah's natal hour!

Now some strain from strings melodious
Bids each longing heart divine
That his love from cup and goblet
Overflows like sparkling wine!

Now the Nargis growing languid,
Dreamily the marvel sees:
Blossoms opening, petals floating
Lightly on the wafting breeze.

Green and bright, the turf is growing
Tow'rd each joyous bud and blade:
And the fleet deer now are browsing
Calmly in the forest glade.

What was Jesu's mission, Osman?
Ask them whom he came to guide.
Gave his life for their Redemption,
For his flock he gladly died!

Now, the garden, behold!
Will the nightingale mourn
When the song of love's marvels
From each blossom's upborne?

There's a home for the stricken,
Love's sorrows to cure,
There is solace for hearts
Which their sufferings endure.

There's an Image of Glory
Men shall hail with delight,
And the hour is nigh
When it beams on their sight!

And the votaries of Jesus,
A faith-guided race,
Hail the Book and the Cross
As his symbols of grace!

In the Sacred Temple
Doth Mariam proclaim:
" Lo! He blesseth thine altar,
And Jesus his name"!

See how Good-Will and Peace
From Life's mirror shine,
Filling hearts of men, Osman!
With Glory Divine!

Here are Mary and Jesus—
The blessed twain ;
Here the book and the hand
That can cure all pain !

Now her arms are blest
And her heart is stilled—
Yea, the yearning heart
With its hopes fulfilled.

For all ailments to cure—
Whether shown or concealed,
Came His breath and the Word
Which His lips have revealed !

Take His birth as a blessing,
For He who was born
In the darkness of night
Is the Light of the Morn.

O, the Joy of it, Osman !
None can tell of its power
Save the colour of wine
In the cup of the flower.

Oh! the coming of Jesus—
A blessing to all!
Fresh tint to the roses
Where dew-drops fall!

How proud is life's mirror
That showeth his face
And those locks that are waving
In ringlets of grace!

Oh that Voice, life-giving—
A marvel of power!
'Tis a salve for the stricken
In suffering's hour!

Midst yon azure flowers
The Nightingale's song
Now flows like a life-breath
The garden along.

From the Nightingale, Osman,
Who would borrow delight,
Let him see buds and blossoms
All joyous and bright.

Mark of Jesus the miracle :
The touch that can heal !
And this musk-breathing morn
Brings that message of weal.

From both quarters one voice is
Proclaiming One name ;
Both the Church and the Musjid
His glory proclaim.

And the Nightingales warble
Their songs of delight
By streams to the tints
Of the blossoms bright.

He is born, the Redeemer !
On a day like this
Cup and beaker are symbols
Of rapture and bliss !

Jesu's sign was this, Osman !
Raised the dead by Command ;
As the token of Moses
Was his shining hand !

What a vision of Glory
Makes loftier the Sky !
The glory of Messiah
Exalted on high !

O how blest was the Season ;
How favoured the earth,
When the Holy Land witnessed
The day of his birth !

To the Garden of Bliss
What a bloom did he bring,
With each hour renewing
The freshness of Spring !

What a radiance of Bliss
Did around him shine !
It might well put to shame
E'en the rapture of wine.

For the birth of Messiah
By his Maker's grace
Was an ancient City
In a hallowed place.

Now his miracles, mark !
By what power divine
Was the water turned
At his bidding to wine.

And the Feast prepared
In his Maker's name,
Whose might did the light
of the Bible proclaim !

HAIL Mariam and Jesus, two forms and one power !
In the tulip's red heart is the scent of the flower.

Oh ! What joy at their coming all sick hearts must feel,
When the draught comes that cures, and the touch that can heal !

Says this month of December " What raptures are mine—
'Midst these carols and revels of music and wine " !

But mark, in these revels what marvels are found,
When the wine-cups are dancing and goblets go round.

What hopes and desires—all linked in a chain,
As the substance and form of our longings remain !

On His shoulder see leaning with tangled hair,
The night of deep woe and the night of despair !

Lo ! the perfumes, Osman, from all sides upborne,
Throw their amber and musk on all garments worn.

The Battle of Cadesia (Firdausi)

UNTO Yezdgurd, mark with a heedful eye,
What was done by yon sevenfold heavens on high!
As he sate on a monarch's throne elate,
With the crown on his head, of his high estate,

Said he thus: "By a turn of the rolling sky
The sole pious heir of Noushirwan, I

And from sire to son is this kingship mine,
And on me Sol, Virgo and Pisces shine.

Be it mine to seek wisdom, and greatness, and height,
And the pride of a warrior in manhood and might.
For fortune abides with no man as his own;
Neither wealth nor a monarch's crown and throne;

But the good name will live, not the vain desire;
So, away with each wish and to name aspire!

Immortal the man who will live in his fame
When in dust lies buried his lifeless frame.

How well Faith and Justice a monarch adorn
While on tongues of acclaim is his name upborne!

While there's life in my limbs 'its my purpose and will
To uproot from the world every seedroot of Ill."

The nobles applauded with joyous acclaim,
And as King of the Earth was resounded his name.

Finally revised 1954.

And then twice eight years in this wise were sped
While the sun and the moon rolled on overhead.

It was thus when the Arabian, that ruler of might,
Whose sword it could darken the day like night

Omar who then o'er the Faithful held sway,
By his Maker extolled for his righteous way

Sent Sa'd Wakkas, the Chosen, with a host to bring
To battle the might of the Persian King.

As the Arab star triumph'd over Persia's doom.
The fate of Sassanians was shrouded in gloom.

Earth needed no kings, for her measure ran o'er,—
When low coinage appeared, there was gold no more!
All fair turned to foul, and all foul turned to fair,
Unto Heaven and Hell was the way laid bare.

And the rolling Sphere showed an altered face,
And its favour withdrew from the Persian race.

With the World Creator's righteous will
Let man's doings accord and His mandate fulfil,

Which none may withstand, not a creature born;
None but He giveth life, none can faces adorn.

Yezdgurd heard the tidings and forthwith he bade
That his troops from all quarters be thither conveyed;
That the son of Hormuz should speed on his way
And draw up his legions in battle-array.

He was Rustum by name, and a gallant knight,
And a princely warrior, and prudent in fight.

And his skill could the starry heavens explore,
While his ears were lent to the Mobids' lore.

And onward he went with some leaders of name,
Men of worth who both valour and prudence could claim ;
And so thirty moons in the march were spent
Till they gained Cadesia on battle intent.

But Rustum could judge from the phase of the skies,
What the stars revealed to his pious eyes.

" Ill-omen'd this war, and no kings may ride
On the current " quoth he, " of this river's tide ".

And the Astrolabe brought and the planets scanned . .
Saw the evil day—held his head with his hand.

He then wrote to his brother a missive of woe,
Recounting therein all his brother should know.

First praised he the Maker of all, by whose will
He had seen in his life both of good and ill.

Said next " From the movements observed in the skies,
In the heart of a seeker misgivings arise.

Oh, the greatest sinner of this age am I . . .
Hence a captive in Ahriman's bonds I lie !

For this House, bereft of all kingly power,
There's no season of triumph, no victory's hour !

From the Chamber Fourth can the sun behold
How fast tow'rd his champions the war tide hath rolled.

And Bahram and Zohra to us danger portend—
And the heavens on high will ordain the end.

The Archer and Saturn are as equals on high,
And Mercury stands in the Gemini;

It is so—and before us a giant strife;
And my heart is weary and sated with life!

All, all I can see, that is doomed to be—
And silence the choice that is left to me!

When this secret I learnt from the rolling Sphere,
That our meed from it was but toil severe,

For the doom of th' Iranians my sorrows did flow,
And my heart was consumed with Sassanians' woe.

Alack for that head and that crown and throne,
And their might pomp and grandeur untimely o'erthrown!
Hereafter subdued by the Arab arms—
While the planets roll over nought but harms!

And then four hundred years in this way will have flown,
Yet no man of this seed will the wide world own!

From the Arabs an envoy came over to me,
And on divers themes we held converse free.

"From Cadesia" said he "to the riverside
We leave lands to the king, would he but provide

Over highways to towns unto mart and fair
Free passage to purchase and sell our ware.

To buy and to sell is our only aim—
Beyond this there is nothing that we mean to claim.

Our Tribute we'll take, and not crave the crown,
Nor the high estate of your men of renown.

And due heed we will pay to your monarch's command;
Yea, give him a pledge, should he pledge demand."

Though such be their words, yet a word's not a deed;
And an evil Star doth this evil breed!

And for all their vows there'll be ceaseless strife,
Till a hundred fierce fighters shall yield up life.

So, the chieftains all, who are on my side
Pay no heed to their words and their terms deride.

So the clans of Armenia, and Tabris who fight
With a fiendish will, and with fiendish might;

So the Mahu of Sur and the Chiefs of the race
Who the battle axe wield, and the ponderous mace.
"Who are these" they ask with a lofty brow,
"What seek they in Iran and Mazindran now?

Whether highways, or lands—whether good or ill—
With the mace and the sword we must guard them still.

We will srive, we will fight with our manhood and might
Till we make the world narrow and drear in their sight."

But none knows the secret of the rolling Sphere;
Its aspect has changed, and it frowns austere,

When thou read'st this, and plans with the leaders hast made,
Then lead forth the army for battle arrayed.

Gather all thou hast—all that's left thee by fate,—
Thy servitors all, and thy robes of state,

And to Azarabadagan hasten with thee ;
To the home of the mighty, the seat of the free.

And all horses thine, that in pastures stray,
Unto Azargashasp to the Warden convey.

From Zabulsitan or from Iran's host,
If men come for refuge from danger's post,

Receive them with kindness, their fault forbear,
And be mindful of ills that the heavens prepare !

Unto them all our joys and our sorrows we owe—
Now lifted on high and then thrust down low !

To our mother repeat what I've said unto thee,
For my face again she may never see.

Give my greetings to her, and entreaty and prayer
That she be not sore stricken with sorrow and care ;
And should any one bring thee ill tidings of me,
Not for long o'er my fate let thy mourning be !

In this Wayside Inn of a few days' life
Whoso hoardeth treasure with toil and strife,

From his worldly wealth nought but sorrow will gain,
While others the fruits of his labours obtain,

What boon unto thee did thy craving impart
That no less than before should now crave thy heart?

Nay, worship thy God and His favour implore,
And away from this world teach thy spirit to soar!

There are days of distress for this age in store—
And our sovereign hereafter may see me no more.

So, let all of you, who to our kin belong,—
Aye every one, whether old or young—

Aye proffer to God a full tribute of praise,
And beseech the Creator for His grace always.

For in jeopardy now, and in woeful plight
Are my soldiers and I in this hapless fight;

But no rescue for me do the tokens foretell—
Sweet Iran, thou land of delights, farewell!

When the world round the king grows straitened and bare,
Neither wealth, life, nor limb in his cause must thou spare.

Of this lordly line and this House of fame
None is left but this monarch of exalted name.

Watch o'er him and guard him by day and by night—
Till thou know how I fare with these Arabs in fight.

And in striving for him, see, no laggard thou be!
For us on this earth there's no master but he;

He's the last sole relic of the Sassan reign,—
Not a man of this House will hereafter remain.

Alack for that crowned head, and justice and grace,
And that throne of kings which the times will abase!

Be thou safe from all harm, from all suffering free,
By our monarch's person on guard to be!

And if danger come nigh—give thy head to the sword!
Not a murmur from thee, not an idle word!

In the days when the pulpit doth vie with the throne
The name will be Bu Bakr and Omar alone.

And long will these days and their sorrows remain;
Yea, long the decline ere we rise up again.

No throne, and no crown, and no city thou'lt see,
While the favouring Star with the Arabs will be.

Then the day will come—when long days have flown—
Of all worldly wealth they'll be sated grown.

And then some of their section black garments will wear;
And caps of brocade will adorn their hair;

But no throne and no crown and no shoes deckt with gold;
And no jewelled crest, and no banner's bright fold!
One will toil, but only for another's gain;
For grace and for bounty they will look in vain.

Night comes and one's eyes may with gladness shine,
Another's will close—and some hearts will pine!

So their nights and days amid changes are sped,
With the band round the waist and the cap on the head!
They will turn from the truth, none will promise redeem;
And the mean and the false will be held in esteem.

Lo! horseless the man who is eager to fight—
While the boaster, the babbler goes mounted as knight!

And the warlike yeoman will have lost his skill,
And the claim of high lineage will fare but ill.

Men will wrest from each other what each one will claim;
They'll be heedless of praise, they'll be careless of blame.
What's hid in the heart will be worse than is shown;
And the hearts of all men will be hardened to stone.
Distrust will be rife betwixt son and sire;
To the parent's hurt will the son conspire.

If the Ruler himself were a man of no worth,
Then of little avail would be noble birth.

Not a man in the world would keep faith on his part,
And each tongue would be cruel, and cruel each heart.
From the Persian, the Turk and the Arab seed
There will come into being a mingled breed;

Neither Persian, nor Turk, nor yet Arab are they;
And their words are a game as their deeds betray.

And their treasures all 'neath the skirt they will hide;
They will labour, but all for their foes provide.

As widespread are suffering and sorrow and pain
As were mirth and revels in Bahram Gur's reign.

Neither festal delights, neither merit nor name—
All planning to spread out their nets for their game,–

They will seek others' loss and will make it their gain,
And with vows of faith will their frauds sustain!

There'll be nothing to mark off the Winter from Spring,
For no wine to their feasts will they ever bring.

Neither craving increase, nor on luxuries fed,
They'll be robed all in wool, and will eat barley bread.

'Twill be long ere this story is brought to a close,
But no man will give heed to the Persians' woes;

They will seek to gain riches by bloodshed and crime,
And their age will be deckt with the evils of time!

Oh, my heart did bleed and my face grew pale,
And a chilling breath did my parch'd lips exhale,

That I as their champion was hastening their doom
And the fate of Sassanians was shrouded in gloom!

Yet so faithless had grown the revolving Sphere
That its grace was annulled and its looks were austere.
If I hurled my lance at an adamant rock
From my arm of steel, it would cleave with the shock;

But now my iron-piercing lance and dart
Are of little avail 'gainst a naked heart!

And that self-same sword which could once at a blow
Have the head of an elephant, or tiger, laid low,

Cannot carve its way through an Arab's hide!
How my knowledge brings loss; and what losses betide!
This knowledge of mine,—would I had it not!
Nor this gloomy foreboding of evil lot!

The Chiefs who are with me—from Cadesia they came—
Are bitter as foes to the Arab name;

And these wilds, they deem, will be red with the blood
Of the foe, which will run like the Jaihun's flood.

But none of them knows the dread secret of fate,
That our sorrows and trials will not soon abate,

For a race, all whose days in this world are o'er,
What deeds of high daring will serve evermore?

Health and joy to thee, brother, that life can bring!
Mayst thou solace the heart of the Persian King!

But for me—this Cadesia is marked for my tomb;
Bloody helm and shroud-armour betoken my doom!
Such the secret will of the Sphere above;
Then let not thy heart be distressed for my love!

Of our master the King, see thou never lose sight—
And to save his life give up thine in fight!

For that day draws nigh, as the Demon's day,
When the rolling Sphere will its hate display."

When the letter was sealed, with a word of heed
To a courier he gave it and wished him Godspeed ;

And bade him that script to his brother convey,
And to say unto him what was needful to say.

Another swift courier was bidden repair
Tow'rd Sa'ad, with the speed of the lightning, to bear
A missive they wrote on white parchment clear—
With a little of hope and with more of fear.

On its brow : 'From Rustum the world-famed knight,
The son of Shah Hormuz, aye ready to fight,

To the seeker of war, Sa'ad Wakkas, the brave—
Full of wisdom and counsel, and cautious and grave.'
"In the sight of the Lord of the World" 'twas said,
"'Twere ill if we lived without awe and dread.

By Him is the rolling Sphere held in its place,
And His sovran might is all Justice and Grace.

May His blessings alight on our master the King,
Who adorneth the Crown and the Throne and the Ring!
Triumphant as Ahriman's warder and lord,
He is lord of the lasso, the helm and the sword.

Now this task comes before us—unseemly and rife
With sufferings and hardships and travail and strife!

Tell me who is thy king, and what man art thou,
And what laws dost thou own, and what customs avow?
Seekest wealth and power? And from whose hand—
Thou the naked chief of a naked band?

With a loaf though sated, thou dost hungry remain;
Hast no throne and no elephants, no baggage train.
To be let live in Persia is enough for thy share;
Of her Signet and Crown another has care,

Who with pomp of elephants, and crown and throne,
E'en from father to son as a King is known;

For above him there's none on the throne in sway;
In the heavens no moon with a brighter ray!

From his royal throne when he deigns to smile
And opens his gracious lips, the while

Large gifts (that might ransom the Arabs) bestow;
Yet no loss from such bounty his treasury knows.

Twelve thousand of leopard and hawk and hound,
With their hoods, bells and ear-rings, and in leashes bound—
With these through the year do his spearman ne'er
Lack for food as from bourne unto bourne they fare;
'Tis for them with the leopard and hound to gain
By hunting the game on the open plain.

And on camel's milk, and on lizards fed,
Is the Arab so far by his arrogance led

That he covets the crown of proud monarchs? O fie!
Be the shame of it thine, O thou rolling sky!

Not a vestige of shame can be seen in your eyes;
Nor of pity nor grace that becometh the wise.

Such looks and such manners,—and yet ye would own
With the right of a monarch, a crown and a throne!
If ye sought from the world a just measure of gain,
Then ye would not speak in such vaunting strain.

To parley with us if a spokesman you send,
World-knowing and wise, and to prudence a friend,
To tell us your wishes, and to say who brings,
And has shown you the way to this throne of Kings;
Then a horseman I'll send to my King to crave
Such a boon for you as you wish to have.

But be not at strife with so mighty a king,
Lest ruin and shame in the sequel it bring!

A grandson of kings, from Noushirwan sprung,
Whose justice was such that the old grew young!

He's a monarch born of the monarchs of old;
No other such relic do the times now hold.

Nay, fill not the world with a loathing of you,
And be not perverse in the course you pursue.

Give heed to this message of warning aright;
Be not vain of your wisdom its purport to slight."

When this letter was sealed, to the hand he gave,
Of Piroze Shapur, the high-born and brave;

And to seek Sa'ad Wakkas away went the knight
With some magnates of Iràn, of leading and light.

They were all clad in iron and silver and gold,
Golden bands round the waist, golden shields did they hold.

Sa'ad heard, and the leader was closer at hand,
In a cloud of dust, with his warlike band;

And as soon as he did from his charger alight,
Of his rank and his force Sa'ad queried the knight;

Of the Shah and his Premier who ruled o'er the land;
Of the forces in arms, and the Chief in command.

Then he flung down his mantle for Piroze and cried
"We have Sword and Javelin—this pair side by side;
For 'tis not brocade that proclaimeth the man;
Neither food and sleep, gold nor silver that can.

Not for you to claim manhood, or to play manhood's part,
Who are all paint and perfume, and all woman's art!
In wearing silk raiment your talent is tried,
And adornment of doors and of roofs is your pride!"

At that moment Piroze gave the letter, and told
What Rustum had said, his meaning to unfold.

When the words he heard, as the missive was read,
He paused for a while, to amazement led;

Then in Arab tongue did his answer indite,
Unfolding the sequel of Wrong and of Right.

On the brow of the page was the name of the Lord,
And Mohammed, His Prophet, and guide to his Word.

Of the Jinns he told, and of Adam's race,
Of the Hashimite Prophet, his Message of Grace;

Of the Qur'ān, and Unity, of Promise and Threat;
Of the Faith reformed, and the Ritual set;

And of blazing tar, and of freezing cold;
Of Firdaus, where rivers of Milk and Wine rolled;

Of Camphor and Musk, and pure Waters that shine;
Of the Tree of Paradise, and of honeyed Wine.

If the Shah chose this True Faith, then surely were his,
This world and the next with his kingship and Bliss;

With his crown and his earrings his years would be spent
In a life of finery and colour and scent.

And if Mohammed redeemed him, his soul would be filled
With the scent of the dew from the Rose distilled!

When by deeds of grace there was Heaven to win,
'Twere ill to sow thorns in the garden of Sin!

Neither Yezdgurd's person, nor the world so wide,
Nor his gardens, demesnes, nor his halls of pride,

Nor his throne, nor his crown, neither feast nor fair
Could vie with one glimpse of the Houris' hair!

Yet, this few days' world hath so dazed thine eyes.
That but crown and throne thou hast learnt to prize.

What's the world to a heart that is fraught with pain?
A draught of cold water were worthier gain!

Whoso fronts me in war shall see nothing save
The vision of Hell and the narrow grave;

But for him who joins us Heaven's the prize!
So, mark thou his choice, to see which way it lies.

There's the Life Everlasting, this passes away;
Such the creed of the man that finds wisdom's way."

Then the Arab seal he affixed to the scroll,
And blessings invoked upon Mohammed's soul.

The courier of Wakkas away he went.
And tow'rd Rustum his hurrying course he bent.

When Sho'ba Moghira from his comrades' side
Tow'rd Rustum, the Persian Commander hied,

E'en then from the Iranians some leader of name
From over the way to his Chieftain came:

"Lo! their herald is coming—decrepit and old!
No horse and no arms, no fine raiment—behold!

But a slender blade on his shoulder is borne,
And all open to view is his garment torn."

While Rustum gave ear to the tidings told,
They were drawing asunder the drapery's fold;

Of China's gold 'broidery the strings when they drew,
Like locusts and ants came the cohorts in view.

They placed for the Chieftain a golden chair,
And the Leader of armies he sate himself there;

And a hundred and sixty men seated afore,
They were horsemen of daring and lions in war.

All with crests, and in purple, they were brave to behold,
With their feet encased in shoes garnished with gold;
All with torques and with earrings, in splendour arrayed,
Where the curtains the pomp of a monarch displayed.
When Sho'ba that curtained enclosure drew nigh,
On the carpet he stepped not, he passed it by;

All humbly his foot on the dust he laid,
And a staff he made of his trusty blade;

Then he sat himself down on the dusty ground,
Nor looked at the Chief, nor his captains around.

Said Rustum to greet him "Life's Joy unto thee!
Be thy soul full of wisdom, thy limbs sound and free!"
Said Sho'ba "O Worthy, were the True Faith thine,
Gods' Peace would be on thee, and blessings divine!"

And Rustum he writhed at the words he heard,
And a frown on his puckered brow appeared.

Then the letter he gave to his Reader's hand,
And the man who read made him understand.

His answer ran thus "Say, no monarch art thou,
Nor heir to a crown that awaiteth thy brow;

And my Star o'er the spearhead thou didst not see
When thy heart did covet our throne for thee!

No word of warning is scorned by the wise—
But no foresight hast thou in this vain emprise.

If Sa'ad wore the crown of a monarch—we might
As equals have met both in feast and in fight;

But faithless our Star, and an evil day,
And an evil doom! What else can I say?

Oh! if Mohammed himself were to be my guide—
I might choose the new faith, from the old turn aside!

But all evil the way of this vaulted sky,
And evil the doom it is plotting on high.

So now hasten thou back, and rejoice in thy life;
There's no room for words in this day of strife.

Go tell him my choice is the Death of Fame—
More welcome to me than is words' idle game"!

So, Sho'ba went back, and the Chieftain bade
His warriors all be in arms arrayed.

And at his command did the trumpet sound
And his soldiers rushed in from all sides around.

O such dust and din as they all rushed in,
That the sharpest ear had turned deaf with the din!

When their darts, tipped with diamonds, in the dust shone bright,
They were stars, thou hadst said, of the azure night.

And so tempered their helms that on them the spears
Were of little avail the hard metal to pierce.

The fighting went on for three days on that ground—
Till the Persians were parched and no water was found.

Unnerved by the thirst, fell each warrior's hand,
Nor could steeds of high mettle its rigour withstand.

So hard went the day in that direful fray,
Man and horse took to eating of soddened clay !

Rustum's lips were as dust, by the thirst outworn,
And the tongue in his mouth was all parched and torn,

When a sound was heard like the thunder's roar,—
There was Rustum here, there was Sa'ad before !

Then away they moved from that place, for they sought
Away from the centre some sheltered spot,

So away from their armies they went till they found
A sheltered spot by a lofty mound.

There they combated fierce in a deadly strife—
Two champions opposed, seeking each other's life.

With a roar from Rustum—and like thunder he roared—
On the head of Sa'ad's charger descended his sword ;

Fell the steed on his head and in agony rolled,
And unseated was Sa'ad, the warrior bold.

Rustum raised his keen sword for his foeman to slay
And so hurry him on to his Judgment day ;

When he thought from his body his head to divide
Rose the dust of the fray and his vision did hide ;

So, down from his leopard hide saddle he sprang,
Fixt the bridle-rein from his girdle to hang,

But nought could he see for the dust in his face ;
And Sa'ad, who had moved aside from that place,

Upon Rustum's helm with his blade he bore,
Till the helm and the face were all smeared with gore.
Then as Rustum's sight with the blood grew dim
The Arab champion grew bold o'er him.

With a stroke on the neck, and a stroke on the head
Laid his foeman low, and the warrior lay dead.

But from either host no one knew of the fray
And none to his Chieftain could find his way

For him far and near when his soldiers sought
They did come round at last to the fatal spot ;

Saw him far in the dust where he bleeding lay—
Sword gash'd head to foot in that fatal fray.

The Persians were routed, and left on the plain
Of their men of renown many a warrior slain.

(936/2)

Adieu!

I watch life fading, and the world grows dim.
I watch; the twilight darkens; night is near.
I hold the cup you once filled to the brim, –
Still, still to find in it some drops that cheer.

I watch; the moon is setting; starbeams shower
Around my cold bare brow a warning light.
My hand still holds your gift – a fading flower,
Still, still it breathes of you in sad delight!